
This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google™ books

<http://books.google.com>



DA 93
207
J2
v.1



3 1293 10256 1440

L

LIBRARY

~~←~~ 029
RECKUP WTR 1983

AUG 13 1988
28430

SEP 21 1988

H I S T O R Y

O F

THE LIFE

O F

RICHARD CŒUR-DE-LION,

KING OF ENGLAND.

BY G. P. R. JAMES, Esq.

AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF CHARLEMAGNE," "EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE,"
"RICHELIEU," "BARNLEY," ETC ETC.

VOL. I.

NEW-YORK:

J. & H. G. LANGLEY, 57, CHATHAM-STREET.

—
1842.

H. LUDWIG, PRINTER,
73 Vesey-st. N. Y.

10-10-85
Newman
Gen.
(2 vol.)

INTRODUCTION.

WHOEVER has given the slightest attention to the history of the human mind, must have remarked, that at certain points it changes the path which it has previously been pursuing, assumes a new course suited to the circumstances that for the time surround it, labours therein until operating upon every thing within its sphere it has produced a complete alteration in all around it; and then again takes another direction, in which it once more proceeds till in that also it has effected certain results: all its operations tending to one great end; the enlargement of its own powers and scope of action, though often impeded by physical obstacles, often thrown back by great moral convulsions.

Such changes in the direction of the human mind mark the true philosophical periods of history; and though some may present more striking and entertaining incidents than others, yet each is important to the eye of the historian as steps taken in the general progress of society. Of these periods one of the most important, as well as one of the most interesting, is that which comprises the rise and fall of the feudal system. It is one of the many military periods which the world has seen; but is distinguished from all others, both by a peculiar organization of society, and by an institution totally without parallel in other ages, so that the name of the feudal period, and that of the chivalrous period, are perhaps equally appropriate. As an epoch of marvellous incidents and great enterprises, it affords unfailing matter for entertaining research; but its importance as a subject of study is derived from the extraordinary advance which society made during its existence towards the estab-

VOL. I.—1

283159

Digitized by Google

lishment of institutions, and the acknowledgment of truths, that might seem absolutely incompatible with the very means that brought them forth.

That a well-contrived and organized system of oppression should have begot rational liberty as its child and successor; that bloody wars and fierce contentions should have had for a result the softening of manners and the refinement of society; and that wanton aggression and brutal outrage should have produced definitions of right and limitations of power, are at present well known facts, but are still as extraordinary as they are important; and in tracing how these great things were brought about, we may well derive many an important lesson, many an exhortation, and many a warning, even while we seem to be reading nothing but an account of battles and sieges, great military enterprises, and acts of magnificent daring.

No portion, perhaps, of the feudal or chivalrous period affords a more distinct picture of its characteristic peculiarities than that comprised in the life of Richard I., King of England. He was himself a type of the age to which he belonged, and his good and bad qualities very faithfully represented the faults and excellencies of feudalism and chivalry. But before we proceed to narrate the events comprised within the limits of his life, we must take a brief view of the state of society at the time, especially in England, even though it may be necessary to repeat or abridge what others have before said upon the same subject; for we must not take it for granted that the reader is already acquainted with anything materially affecting that which we have to narrate.

Nevertheless, it will not be necessary to trace minutely the origin of the feudal system, or to show by what steps it gradually assumed a complete and homogeneous form. Suffice it to say, that it was, in its commencement, a certain constitutional organization, adopted by a great society of

military adventurers, for the purposes of general defence and mutual support in conquered countries ; and its chief distinguishing feature or characteristic, was the general distribution of the territory amongst the soldiery, in unequal portions, but upon one general principle and condition,—namely, that of military service, upon the part of the holder of each estate, to the leader from whom he obtained it. This general holding of the great bulk of the territory by such tenure, seems to me the *sine qua non* of the feudal system ; and from it, indeed, that system derives its name. In countries where it did not exist as the general rule, there might be some feudal institutions—there might be some customs and laws resembling those of feudalism ; but the feudal system was not established.*

Of course this system was not framed at once ; but was gradually produced by the necessities of the northern invaders of the Roman empire, when placed in a new situation by the effects of their own conquests. They brought the rude materials of their government from their native wilds, but fashioned them according to the circumstances in which they were placed in the lands they acquired. Though the great body of the invaders was composed of

* Independent of the custom of giving a heriot upon the death of a great man, which some persons have looked upon as a feudal relief—though I can by no means do so, inasmuch as the heriot was levied upon the personal property of the dead man, not upon the real property of the heir, who very possibly might receive no part of the personal goods from which the heriot was taken—but independent of this questionable case, the Anglo-Saxons had several feudal institutions. We must indeed put aside the oath of fealty, which has too often been confounded with that of homage in a most unphilosophical manner ; but still the benefice or *lén* was held by military service to a chief, and though not hereditary, was of the nature of a fief, being thus of feudal tenure. Nevertheless, the general possession of the land was not held by that tenure till after the Conquest, and the feudal system cannot properly be said to have existed amongst the Anglo-Saxons.

different nations, yet a similarity of customs prevailed amongst them; and though the districts that the various tribes conquered were far apart, yet everywhere they met the vestiges of Roman institutions. The similarity of circumstances in these points produced a similarity of necessities; and the general adoption of a uniform system was the result.

It must not indeed be understood that perfect uniformity was established throughout Europe, for such was not the case. In some places more of the Roman forms and institutions were retained; in others the northern notions predominated; but the differences, though important to the countries into which the Roman empire became subdivided, were not important as to the system itself. The forms of the feudal system in various parts of Europe were only varieties of the same plant, the seeds of which had been brought from the north, and cultivated in Roman soil.

The unequal distribution of corporeal and mental qualities, has always impressed the mind of man in a social state with a conviction that it is necessary some should lead and some should follow; and the only difference in this point between the most purely democratical and the most purely monarchical forms of society, consists in the method of selecting the leaders. What was the method adopted by the northern invaders of Rome while in their native wilds, matters little; nor is it of much consequence at what period a regular subordination of chiefs was established, from the great leader of a mighty host to the patriarch who was followed to the field by his five or six sons. As they were all essentially warlike nations, and all from a very early period were engaged in active enterprise, it is probable that military qualities were the original titles to command, and that they soon adopted a general gradation of leaders.

The first expeditions of the northern nations were purely

predatory. When spoil was taken, it was in almost all cases equitably divided;* but when territory was acquired as well as moveable plunder, a complication of interests took place; and we find, especially in the earlier periods of feudalism, an infinite number of discrepancies in the allotment of conquered territories, which are difficult to account for. The exceptions, indeed, do not prove that some regular system of distribution did not prevail; because the course of the invaders was subjected to a thousand accidents, by which they were obliged of necessity to guide their proceedings. Sometimes their conquests were not altogether successful; sometimes they encountered a tribe as bold and hardy as themselves, and were obliged to enter into compromises which left their opponents in possession of large tracts, with laws, manners and customs, in various points discordant with the growing system which had been brought from the north. At all events, we know that discrepancies did exist; and there is proof of allodial or free-land—that is to say, land held by no feudal tenure, but in what may be called pure possession—having existed in various parts of Europe down to a very late period.

It would occupy too much space to inquire into the origin of the different tenures which we find in the earlier ages of feudalism, or to investigate why certain estates appear from the first to have been hereditary, while others were resumable at the will of the sovereign.† All—not without exception, as we shall see hereafter, but as a general rule—very soon became hereditary through the

* The reader need not be reminded of the story of Clovis and Vasi.

† I agree entirely with Dr. Lingard, that the theory of fiefs being originally beneficiary grants of land, resumable at pleasure, but gradually improved into estates of inheritance, is, perhaps, erroneous, though specious. They may have been so, but I have many doubts upon the subject; though I must remark that the regard had, through the whole system of feudal law, to the lord's ultimate right in the land in case of ~~es~~ cheat, would seem to favour this theory.

greater part of Europe ; and the grand distinction that remained was between allodial, or free-lands, and lands feudal, or held upon the condition of military service. The natural progress of feudal institutions, however, and the superior protection enjoyed by the feudal vassal, had converted almost all allodial lands on the continent into feudal lands before the invasion of England by William, called the Conqueror ;* so that by that time, the feudal system had not only reached its highest degree of perfection in most of the European monarchies, but had become the general law of policy, beyond the limits of which men's minds could conceive no beneficial institutions.

It was with such notions that the Norman warriors were filled when they invaded this island, and overthrew the Saxon monarchy. In England, however, they found a very different state of things existing, and an organization opposed in a thousand particulars to that which had been gradually produced in continental territories. Feudalism, in short, as a system, did not exist ; for the circumstances of England were different from those of any other country conquered by the invaders of the Roman empire, and the necessities which had produced that organization amongst other nations had not been felt by the Saxons. They had adopted, indeed, various feudal institutions ; but the great principle of the feudal system—that is to say, the general tenure of land upon the condition of military service, due not to the country but to a leader—was not recognized by the Saxons. It was, indeed, one of their fundamental laws, that all lands were subject to three duties : the building and upholding castles, the building and upholding bridges, and the military defence of the realm. But the military ob-

* As far as the middle of the twelfth century, there still existed several allodial lands in Languedoc, and there are documents in existence, by which these lands were from time to time transferred to feudal lords, and received back again as fiefs.

ligation implied by the last clause, is clearly shown to have been merely the expugnation of foreign invasion, and not service due to a particular chief as a return for lands held of him, which was the characteristic of feudal service.* Putting this law out of the question, then, the lands of the Saxons were held by various tenures, some of which were quite repugnant to the feudal system, and some similar to feudal holdings of an early period. It is not necessary to enumerate the names given to these various tenures, or to mark fine distinctions ; the grand difference was between the lands held free of any other military duty but the great national one of realm defence, and those which were burdened with distinct military service of a feudal character. The Thaneland, which has been held to be synonymous with bocland, or charterland, and of which consisted the great bulk of the estates of the Saxon nobles, is clearly shewn to have been allodial, and was hereditary ; while the sort of estate called beneficium, was granted upon terms of military service due to a particular leader, and may therefore be considered as feudal ; though by this time feudal lands on the continent of Europe had become generally hereditary, while the benefice was granted only for a certain period—sometimes for more than one life, indeed, but sometimes merely for a period of years, and sometimes resumable at will. In the difference between the thane land and the benefice, lay the great distinction in the tenures of the Saxon nobles. The one holding was of allodial or free hereditary lands, the other

* So totally distinct was the natural duty of what may be termed *realm defence* from the feudal and conventional duty of military service, that the two are, if anything, opposed to one another. They may indeed be absolutely considered as opposed in their origin, for the feudal service was the service of the invader, the realm defence the duty of the invaded. The latter was purely territorial, the former personal ; the latter was an extension of the right of defending individual property, produced by the necessities of society ; the former was the application of military subordination in the distribution of conquered territory.

was of estates, not hereditary, and held by military service to a chief; but there is every reason to believe, that the same person often held estates of both kinds.* There was, however, land held by the commons, which was called Folkland, and which resembled the benefice in not being absolutely hereditary, but which was free from feudal service. These lands were occupied by the yeomanry of England, the great strength and security of the nation. Besides the nobles and the free tenants of the Folkland, was another class, namely, that of most wretched and depressed slaves, who in many respects were in a more abject state of bondage than the continental villeins.

The estates of the church were generally—universally, I believe, under the Saxon dynasty—held by what is called Franc-almoign, which tenure implied no feudal service of any kind, but which in return for grants from nobles and princes, required merely the prayers of the priesthood in behalf of the givers and their families.

Such was briefly the state of landed property in England at the period of the Norman conquest; and such were the institutions of the people by whom William I., and his victorious army, all impressed with the doctrines of feudalism, found themselves environed after the battle of Hastings. The claims which that monarch had put forth to justify his invasion, and to facilitate his progress, now of course affected—if they cannot be absolutely said to have embarrassed—his conduct in dealing with the kingdom

* On the continent this was certainly the case, till the feudal system was fully established. The various capitularies of the Carlovingian monarchs display in many instances both the distinction between the two tenures, and the fact of persons holding by both. One of the most to the point is, perhaps, the following:—"Qui beneficium domni Imperatoris aut Ecclesiarum dei habet, nihil exinde ducat in suam hereditatem ut ipsum beneficium destruatur."—*Karoli Magni Capitul. ad. ann. 803; Mon. German Histor., tom. 3, p. 122.*

which he had acquired. His own prejudices, and the prejudices of those who accompanied him, required him to introduce the feudal system ; and the necessity of rewarding and attaching those on whose support he could alone rely, rendered it imperative that he should divide a large portion of the conquered territory amongst his followers. But he had put forward the claims of an heir to the throne of England, and not those of a conqueror ; and that fact may have tended both to soften the authority of victory, and produce some of those curious contradictions which have been remarked in his conduct. In a synod, held under William's own immediate eye, those men to whose swords he owed the crown, were ordered to do penance for every blow they had struck in the very battle which had placed him on the throne, and he bade them mourn for the act, while he rewarded them largely for its success.

At the same time, his dealings with the Saxons were at first milder than perhaps they themselves expected. No general partition of the territories took place ; means were employed to secure the persons and the property of the Saxons from the licentiousness of their Norman invaders ; and few excesses were committed after that which signalized William's coronation, till the period of his departure for his continental dominions. Then, however, oppression on the one hand, and open resistance or covert treachery on the other, spread over the whole land. William had conveyed with him to Normandy many of the Saxon chiefs ; so that the conquered people, wanting experienced leaders, obtained but little success in their various desultory insurrections, and afforded a very plausible pretext for the general pillage of their property, and the subversion of their laws and customs. On his return to England, William displayed towards the refractory Saxons the most barbarous severity. That severity only urged them on to the perti-

nacious resistance of despair, which again was constantly followed by defeat and punishment.

In the course of a few years scarcely one noble Saxon of any great power or wealth could be found who had not appeared in arms against the invader whom he had sworn to receive as his King, and who had not been overthrown in war, and stripped of his possessions. A part of the territories thus acquired, William retained as demesne of the crown ; but the rest was distributed amongst his Norman followers ; and of course the recognized principle of feudalism was the rule of partition. Allodial lands were done away ; each great leader received his fief from the King in chief, upon the condition of military service ; and each again enfeoffed his vassals in smaller portions of the forfeited estates ; and this was continued still farther, till the system of subinfeudation was complete. The King was held to be the possessor of the whole, and only to grant it upon the ascertained conditions of the feudal system ; nor was this principle by any means an impotent one, for the ultimate rights of the King were always to be kept in view by the vassal, in dealing with his fief ; as his own contingent rights were always to be considered by his vavasors, and theirs by their sub-vassals through all the grades of subinfeudation. In fact, the permanence of the King's right formed the basis of feudal law ; for on it were founded all those rules and regulations regarding wards and successions which compose the great bulk of a very voluminous code.

Thus the feudal system was established in England before the death of William the Conqueror, perhaps in as perfect a form as in any part of the world ; for I cannot consider some of the customs, and even tenures which he received from the Saxons, as offering any anomaly. The state was now organized in the following grades : barons holding of the crown in chief : vavasors holding under

them ; and valvasini holding under the vavasor, generally possessing one or more knight's fees. These were all military tenants, and took the field when called upon by their sovereign, with a number of armed men proportioned to their land. Below these came the yeomanry, holding by what is called *free soccage*, and owing no military duty except the general one of realm-defence ; and last, appeared the villeins or slaves, who in some respects were in a better situation under the Norman than under the Saxon yoke ; while the important fact that the Norman law tended strongly to their general enfranchisement, is proved by the rapid extinction of villeinage in England after the conquest.

It may be as well to notice that besides the tenures here mentioned, there were one or two others, amongst which were great and petty sargeantry. Great sargeantry was the tenure by which certain noblemen held lands of the King in chief, on the condition of certain services to be rendered to him in person. Petty or petit sargeantry was, in fact, a soccage tenure, whereby the holder of certain lands recognized his dependence upon the King as his territorial lord, by offering yearly some small implement of war. It was distinguished, I imagine, from every other kind of soccage, by being paid immediately to the King ; and by the nature of the due, which was always of a military character, though the tenant was not bound thereby to military service. The tenure of Franc-almoign had been generally superseded under the Conqueror by knight service, the clergy not being required to take the field in person, but to furnish the number of soldiers allotted to their territorial possessions. That Franc-almoign, however, was not universally or permanently done away, we find from the text of Sir Thomas Lyttleton, who writes of it as a tenure actually existing in his own day ; and we also dis-

cover that it was revived as an abusive means of depriving lords of their right.

Besides the military service which has been mentioned, the feudal tenant owed to his lord what was called suit—that is to say, attendance upon his court on certain occasions, as an adviser or counsellor ; and a regular subordination of courts existed under the feudal system, as well as a subordination of military grades. In these courts, whether they were the king's court, the county, the hundred, or the manorial courts, justice was supposed to be administered ; and William, though he changed the forms of the Saxon constitution, rendering the feudal organization, perhaps, more perfect in England, as a system, than it was in any other country, retained the laws and many of the customs of the people he had conquered, and in several remarkable instances maintained different bodies of his new subjects in possession of their former privileges, even when those privileges were contrary to his general system.* One of his most remarkable operations, and one which may be said to have given a degree of perfection to feudalism which was unknown in continental countries, was the division of the whole territory into knight's fees ; that is to say, into portions judged sufficient to furnish, each, one horseman completely armed to a feudal army. The quantity of land so charged, it would appear, varied in extent ; probably on account of the nature and quality of the soil in different parts of the kingdom. Unfortunately, we have lost the data on which the calculation was first made ; but in the latter part of William's reign, a general survey of the whole kingdom was undertaken and completed by commissioners

* In the system itself there was no anomaly, or as few anomalies as can exist in any human scheme ; but William excepted certain classes of his subjects from the operation of some parts of that system, in consideration of their previous state. I say this to guard against misconstruction.

empowered to empannel juries in the various hundreds, and to investigate the nature, quality, extent, and division of the soil. Every statistical fact of interest came under their investigation ; and from the information thus acquired, was compiled the famous Doom's-day Book, the most extraordinary and interesting of our national records. What were the real views with which this survey was ordered, I cannot tell ; but one of the results was, to enable the sovereign to ascertain at once the number of men which each barony was bound to furnish ; and I find no clear proof of such a statistical proceeding having taken place in any other part of Europe before the invasion of England.

Such may be received as a very brief and imperfect sketch of the constitution of this kingdom towards the end of William's reign ; but even while advancing towards perfection, the germs of decay were sown in the feudal system, and before the accession of Richard I., they had made considerable progress. The two great deviations from the true feudal constitution, which, more than any of all the many causes that were ultimately brought into operation against feudalism, contributed to overthrow that wonderful system, owed their admission to the jealousy and ambition of kings. Those two deviations were the institution of communes, or free corporations, and the compounding of military service for money.

Notwithstanding all that the learned Savigni has done, and the light which he has thrown upon the Roman law during the middle ages, it may be doubted whether in any one single instance the old Roman municipal forms descended direct to feudal times in the government of any provincial city. Nevertheless there is much reason to believe that the pre-existence of such municipal forms in particular towns, had a great effect in producing the communes of the middle ages, and offered the type, if not the foundation, of those institutions. These communes first

began to start into life, I think, in the beginning of the eleventh century ; and I believe the town of Laon has the honour of being the first. Horrible oppression, frequent warfare, and the claims and exactions of contending Barons, rendered it absolutely necessary that monarchs should either afford effectual protection to the laborious and increasing inhabitants of cities and towns, or should justify them in defending themselves. The latter alternative, as the most certain, was the one most desired by the citizens ; and kings saw therein the seeds of a force, which they clearly perceived might counterbalance, in some degree, the overgrown power of their ambitious baronage, though they did not look forward to the time when that force might become dangerous to their own authority. The crown therefore encouraged the erections of communes, gave charters to towns and cities, daily enlarged their privileges and immunities, employed the troops raised by the citizens in its own wars, and created a militia, which rendered it less dependant upon the great vassals for military support.

We find that, at first, the outcry raised against the communes was immense ; the feudal proprietors clamoured loudly in regard to the new institution, and in some instances endeavoured to crush it with the strong hand ; while all their scribes wrote against it as an unheard-of and monstrous invention. But still a commune rose here and a commune rose there ; in most cases the neighbouring Baron~~s~~ formed but a small force, unable to contend with the monarch ; the rest of the vassals of the crown did not interest themselves much in matters at a distance from their own estates ; and the struggle was completed, the victory gained, and the institution established by prudence and resolution, before the great body of feudal lords knew how fatal it might become to their power and influence. How far back such institutions may be traced in this country, I

do not know ; but they certainly existed in England long before the accession of Richard I.*

The second of those deviations from the feudal principle to which I have alluded, is the commutation of military service for the pecuniary aid, called scutage or escuage. This custom was gradually, but very easily introduced ; and there was no outcry against it as against the communes. Though the military spirit of the nobility might not wax faint, yet each man, especially in times of civil commotion, and in an unsettled state of society, might have quite enough to do on his own lands, in repelling turbulent or grasping neighbours, in repressing refractory vassals, and in strengthening himself in possession of lately acquired estates, without following his sovereign to a war in which he had no interest, where he could gain little and might lose all. Every Baron indeed was himself bound to personal service, but he was not bound to divide his lands amongst military followers according to the exact number of knights' fees that it contained. On the contrary, only a small part was generally so divided ; but still he was obliged, when called upon, to produce the number of armed men required by the extent of his fief, and consequently some of these were always hired. He was expected to serve for forty days beyond the realm ; but if he continued with the army after that term, it was at the King's charge ; and in order to engage him to prolong his services, the monarch was obliged to hold out various inducements, which were almost always either pecuniary or territorial rewards. Thus the custom of serving for pay was very general, even at an early period of the feudal history ; and nothing was wanting to make a breach in this point of the feudal constitution but the establishment

* Lord Lyttleton shows that communes existed in England in the reign of Henry I. I myself believe that we might go still farther back.

of a right, on the part of those who were bound by tenure to personal service, of substituting hired representatives.

Women had always been permitted to perform the feudal duties repugnant to the delicacy of their sex by deputy. When William rendered the lands of the clergy feudal, he permitted the holders to enjoy the like immunity from a personal performance of acts inconsistent with their sacred office. In carrying on foreign wars, sovereigns found many inconveniences arise from the constitution of feudal armies, from the limitation of the time of service, and from their utter dependance upon their Barons' good will for any farther aid. The nobles, on the other hand, often murmured at being called, for even forty days, from their own affairs, to contentions in which they had no interest. The convenience of both parties might be consulted by the expedient of commuting military service for a sum of money; and perhaps the sovereign saw in that arrangement the means of selecting such of his Barons to follow him as his political views might require, while he left behind him those whose presence might be burdensome or useless. He might also look forward to the time when a mercenary army would become a new counterpoise to the growing power of the Barons.

Lord Lyttleton, in his history of Henry II., informs us that the first distinct example of this innovation took place in the reign of that monarch, who, during a war with the Welsh, permitted not only the spiritual Barons of the realm, but their military tenants to compound for their due service in the field, by payment of a pecuniary fine. He then proceeds to show that in Henry's famous expedition against Toulouse, the permission was extended "to all inferior tenants in chief, and to almost all the subvassals who held by knight service. It was afterwards taken in like manner, not only for wars beyond the sea, but against Wales or Scotland: neither was it denied to the greater

vassals of the crown, (as it had been at first,) unless by their summons they were expressly commanded to follow the King in person, or held some office by grand sargeantry, which required their attendance."

Thus was the whole constitution of a feudal army altered, and the greatest possible innovation effected in the system itself. Monarchs, as we shall see hereafter, soon learned to depend as much or more upon mercenary aid than upon the support of their feudal followers ; and the great military tie was severed which bound the Sovereign and his Barons together. This change, however, greatly increased the revenues of the sovereign ; and having here mentioned one of the sources which supplied money to carry on the various great enterprises of which I shall have to speak hereafter, I may as well notice some other branches of revenue in feudal times, that I may not have to interrupt the course of the narrative for the purpose of explanation hereafter.

The permanent sources of revenue varied very much in different reigns, some monarchs claiming what other sovereigns renounced ; but we find that the rents of the crown lands, which at first were paid in kind, were put upon another footing by Henry I. ; and after some shameful exactions committed by his officers, were equitably settled on a pecuniary estimation. During a long period a considerable revenue was derived from the shameful custom of selling the hands of heiresses and the ward of minors to the best bidders. Sometimes it would seem that an heiress ventured to select a husband for herself ; but she had no chance of uniting her fate to his, unless the price he could give was equal to that offered by another competitor, or that she herself purchased out of her inheritance the right of choice. Wealthy widows were also a subject of traffic with our Norman kings ; and the ward of heirs, which conveyed the proceeds of their estates to the guardians during their minority, was another great source of revenue. The pretence

upon which these exactions were founded, was, that the lord might not lose the advantages of his vassal's service either by the minority or sex of the heir. The claim thus established was magnified and extended by the ingenuity of feudal lawyers; but the real object was the profit accruing to the Sovereign and to his Barons.

Henry I., in his memorable charter, promised a reform of many abuses which had taken place in consequence of the law regarding the marriages of daughters; but we find the absolute sale of the hand of heiresses going on at a much later period. The dues called reliefs formed another constant income. These were paid by the vassal to his lord on taking possession of his fief; and the relief, which actually means "the taking up" of a knight's fee, was fixed by William the Conqueror at one hundred shillings, a very considerable sum at the period of which we speak. The relief of a barony was supposed to be fixed by the number of knights' fees it contained; but was left vague, and was often oppressive.

Besides these sources of revenue, there were aids, some of which were appointed on certain defined occasions, as when the monarch made his eldest son a knight, or on the marriage of his eldest daughter, or on his falling into captivity. But aids or benevolences were called for on many other occasions; and would have been even more oppressive than they proved, had not the Barons and Clergy claimed the right of fixing the amount, and the manner of levying the tax. Customs and dues on bridges, fairs, imports and exports, also increased the royal finances, as did also various fines upon the granting or renewing of privileges to towns, guilds, and even individuals. Tallage, and various taxes upon certain classes of the people, and dane-geld and other dues levied upon land, might be enumerated; but it would occupy too much time to enter into all the particulars of the royal revenue, some of which offer very ob-

scure and difficult points. We must not fail to add, however, that the sale of public justice upon a large and small scale, and the pecuniary amercements which the Norman law assigned to almost all offences, contributed greatly to the wealth of the sovereign.

These sources of income and several others which are here omitted, placed vast riches at the disposal of any monarch of England who managed his expenses reasonably; and at the period of the birth of Richard I. the sovereign might thence derive immense power. The ease with which mercenary troops of tried courage and skill were to be procured, the custom of employing them on various occasions without offence, the right established by kings of summoning such nobles as they pleased to accompany them in their warfare, and to permit others to compound for personal service by the payment of scutage, the differences and divisions which always existed between the Barons themselves, and the gradual tendency of the times to carry every cause into the King's court, had all contributed to counteract the dangerous power which the Norman leaders had acquired after the conquest. At the same time the growth of large towns, the immunities daily conceded to citizens, the increase of commerce, and the gradual enfranchisement of the servile population, was one of the chief causes of the augmentation of the royal authority, when considered in opposition to that of the nobles.

It may be needful here to say a few words in regard to the state of the towns and their inhabitants, who have been looked upon by some writers as little better than serfs or villeins. Such, however, was not at all the case in England, and I cannot discover that it ever was the case. That the people of cities were talliable, does not at all prove that their state approached that of villeinage. All the demesne land of the crown was talliable; and the citizens of the boroughs held apparently as much in free socage as any

other tenants of the crown. No other land I believe was talliable, but land that either was actually, or once had been demesne ; for though many towns were talliated by inferior lords, yet I suspect an investigation into the tenures would show that they had been demesne of the crown, and were granted with the right of talliage* to the lords who held them. The great and increasing prosperity of the towns, likewise shows that no very opposite jurisdiction was exercised over them; and that the freedom of the citizens themselves was well secured, we may infer from the fact that a lord lost all power over a serf who could prove that he had remained a year and a day unmolested in a free borough, so as to be received into a guild or corporation.

England, at that time, contained many cities of much importance. Winchester, Exeter, York, were all large and splendid towns; but London had attained that pre-eminence which it has never since lost. It was indeed, even then, a vast and magnificent capital; for although we cannot depend upon the statements which have come down to us regarding the amount of its population, yet the number of churches within the city and its suburbs reached one hundred and twenty-six, which, with thirteen conventional churches, made one hundred and thirty-nine. Its limits too in the reign of Richard I. are very clearly defined, so that we can judge of its extent; for there is no reason to believe that the position of the seven gates of the city has since been altered; and between those gates ran the walls of the town, defended by a number of towers, besides three forts or castles, supposed to be extremely strong, according to the military art of that day. These were Baynard's and Mont-

* Lord Lyttleton says, "Upon the whole, the condition of the citizens and burgesses holding of the crown in those days was never worse, and often better by divers privileges and favours granted to them, than that of all its other tenants in ancient demesne, who held by free socage; and the same may be affirmed of those who belonged to private lords."

fichet Castles, and that which is now called the Tower of London.

The old Palace of Westminster, the site of which is still marked by the magnificent Hall of Rufus, was then at the distance of about two miles from the nearest gate of the city ; but even in the reign of Henry II., we find that a suburb extended from the capital to the royal abode, along that bank of the river which is still called the Strand. It was filled with the houses of citizens and noblemen, and possessed gardens stretching down to the river. The city of London was then, as now, the greatest commercial town in Europe. Its merchandize went forth to all quarters of the earth ; and from the most remote, as well as from neighbouring countries, it received supplies of every article of luxury and necessity which the earth produced, or the ingenuity of man had at that time invented.

We find that here, merchants, from the far east as well as from the north, congregated every year with a certainty of disposing of their most precious commodities ; and the habits of the citizens were of course luxurious and ostentatious in proportion. Though the greater part of the houses were then built of wood, yet others, and those of the chief traders and merchants, were of stone. The architecture of the city we find highly praised by contemporaries ; and as we know what splendid buildings could be raised in those days, we have no reason to suppose that the edifices, whether of wood or of more durable materials, would have failed to excite our admiration also as specimens of a peculiar style. It is not, indeed, within the scope of the present work to give a minute account of the architecture of that age. Suffice it to say, that the period immediately preceding the reign of Richard I. was distinguished by a peculiar style, now known by the name of Norman architecture.*

* Perhaps the name of Saxon might be better applied to this style in England at least, as, historically speaking, there is every reason to be-

This style, distinguished by the general though not constant use of the round arch, by the broad plain buttress, terminating under the cornice tablet, and the heavy low tower, ended with the reign of Henry II., and under his children a new style began.

The interior of the houses, under the Normans, were generally hung with tapestry or cloth; but in the reign of Richard, or shortly after, the rooms were sometimes painted with scenes from histories or fictions. The ceilings also were often richly painted, and gilt with many beautiful forms and devices; but these in all probability were copied from oriental models, as, were it not for some beautiful illuminations, we should have no reason to attribute to our ancestors, in those days, any great skill in the use of the pencil. Nevertheless, luxury had brought forth many of the ornamental arts. The Saxons themselves had been so famous for fine embroidery, and some other kinds of decorations in gold and silver, that as a recommendation to anything supposed to be super-excellent, it was said to be of "English work." Their garments also were so sumptuous

lieve that no fundamental change was made in the architecture which existed in England under the Anglo-Saxons by the Norman conquerors, unless it were the introduction of the pointed arch, which, as Mr. Rickman observes, is to be found in the oldest Norman buildings. The work might be much more refined and delicate, the ornaments might become more elaborate, and several ornaments peculiarly Norman certainly were introduced. Indeed, a refined system of architecture took place of a very rude one; but still the round arch—and certainly the arch must always be admitted as one of the grand characteristics of a style—was employed in this country under the Saxons. In the two buildings which Mr. Rickman admits to be probably of Saxon construction, the round arch is used both for doors and windows; and in speaking of that very style called Norman, he says, "This style seems to have commenced before the conquest." Innumerable churches in Italy offer, in parts indisputably of a date before 1000, details which are entirely of the style now called Norman; and it appears to me, as it did to Mr. Hope, that the epithet as now applied is a complete misnomer.

as to create great surprise in the minds of the Normans, when they beheld some of the English, who had followed the conqueror back to his native duchy, clothed in attire far more splendid than their own. It would appear that the Norman monarchs and their followers did not fail to imitate the inhabitants of their new land in the love of gorgeous apparel ; for we find continual mention of rich silks, fine linen, clothes of resplendent colours, gold, pearls, and gilding, in their caps, dalmatiques, tunics, sword belts, and baldrics ; while it is recorded of William Rufus, that he refused to put on hose which only cost three shillings, at that time an enormous sum, because he thought them too cheap for the legs of a king. Then, as now, fashions in dress were continually varying ; but in the time of William II. the close coats were exchanged for looser apparel, long cloaks were universal, and the hair was not only worn of an excessive length, but was curled in studied ringlets by all the male attendants of the court. Very often false ringlets were added ; and about the same period Fulk of Anjou introduced long points to the shoes, which were often so extravagant in extent, as to be fastened to the knees of the wearer, and were stuffed with various materials to make them retain the peculiar form which the fashion of the day might give them. Now the toe represented a snake, now it was curled round like the horn of a ram.

Excess of drinking has always, unhappily, been an English vice ; and during the Norman domination it was not diminished. Indeed, the luxury of the table was very great in every respect, especially, it would seem, in monasteries and religious houses. We are told, not only that from thirteen to sixteen different dishes were daily set upon some tables, but that these dishes consisted of the most exquisite and costly dainties ; while foreign wines of many kinds, besides mead and other intoxicating liquors,* the produce of

* We find mulberry wine amongst the rest.

the country, flowed in too profuse abundance. It is probable, however, that in the baronial castle, where every vassal found a seat at the board of his lord, and many even of the inferior tenantry were regaled daily, the hospitality, though profuse, was less distinguished by the quality than the quantity of the viands ; and here the native liquors of the land flowed with a liberal stream ; ale, mead, and hypocrass taking place of the juice of the grape. However that might be, whether on the rush-covered hall of the castle, or the flower-strewed pavement of the city mansion, mirth and feasting generally ended in drunkenness, and often in strife.

Manifold in those days were the fine athletic sports of the people, both in the country and in the towns. In general, hunting and hawking were amusements reserved for the nobles ; but the citizens of London possessed peculiar privileges in this respect, and could fly their hawks, or run their hounds, over a wide district in the counties of Middlesex, Hertford, and Kent. The proximity of a number of forests, and especially of Enfield chase, which was then well stocked and of vast extent, rendered this right not insignificant at a period when the preservation of game was more regarded than the preservation of human life.

It is not to be expected that a barbarous age should not have barbarous amusements ; and though we may well wonder that the torture of many domestic animals for the purposes of sport, should have been permitted within a few years of our own day, we cannot be surprised to find that bull-baiting, cock-fighting, bear-baiting, and combats between different dogs, or between dogs and boars, were then amongst the most approved entertainments of the people, as we shall show more particularly shortly. Football, and a number of other games, which have now very generally passed over to schoolboys, were then eagerly pursued by the young men of the land, both in towns and in the coun-

try; and the Maypole, the morrice and the summer moonlight dances to the sound of the harp, as recorded by Fitz-Stephen, afforded softer amusements to the youth of the other sex, from a participation in which it is not probable that male companions were excluded. We are assured that chastity and other moral virtues were general amongst the citizens and lower orders; but the rudeness of the age showed itself both in the frequency of robbery, and the means employed to put a stop to that crime.

Having mentioned the name of Fitz-Stephen, I think it may not be amiss to give some part of his description of the City of London, as it appeared in his time, namely, in the days of Henry II. and Richard I.

“ Everywhere adjoining the houses in the suburbs,” he says, “the citizens have spacious and beautiful gardens, one joining the other, and planted with trees. Round about on the north side of London there are various principal fountains of sweet water, salubrious, clear, and flowing amongst shining pebbles, amongst which those called the Holy well, the Clerk’s well, (now Clerkenwell,) and Saint Clement’s well, are the most celebrated, and most frequented of scholars, and citizens going out in the summer evenings to take the air. The city must certainly be good, as it has a good lord. In London,” continues Fitz-Stephen, “three principal churches have three schools, by privilege and ancient dignity: nevertheless, by favour of some persons or certain teachers who are noted, and eminent for philosophy, there are other schools, by leave and permission. On holidays the masters with their scholars celebrate assemblies at the festival churches. The scholars dispute there, some demonstratively, some dialectically, others recite enthymems, others better use perfect syllogisms. Some exercise disputation for ostentation, as struggling together; others, for truth, which is the grace of perfection.”

I need not proceed further with this description of the

schools, which were the same all through Europe, for several hundred years : places, in short, where the abuse of the understanding was as much taught as its use. But I will go on to quote our author on matters of more interest : “The exercisers of each office, the sellers of each thing, and each hired labourer, are all every morning to be found distinguished by their places as by their offices. There is besides in London, upon the bank of the river, amongst the wine ships and wine cellars, a public kitchen, where every day may be found dishes of meat roasted, sodden and fried ; fish, small fish, meats of coarse kinds for the poor, and more delicate for the rich, as venison, fowl, or small birds. If by chance any one of the citizens should be visited suddenly by friends wearied with travel, and it be not pleasant to let them wait fasting till food can be bought and cooked, let the servants give water for the hands, and bread, while some one runs to the bank of the river, where every thing desirable is ready. Whatsoever multitude of soldiers or travellers enter the city, at whatever hour of the day or night, or are about to go out of the city, that the one may not remain fasting, and that the other may not go out without their dinner, they can turn hither, if they please, and each refresh himself according to his own fashion. Those who wish to take care of themselves delicately, may take a goose, nor need they seek for the African fowl, or the Ionian godwit—delicacies which will be found there ready. This public cookery, indeed, is very convenient, and belongs to the city.”

Fitz-Stephen then goes on to describe the Friday horse market, which he says is attended by Earls, Barons, Knights, and many citizens ; and on this occasion he gives a curious description of the commencement of horse-racing in the market, which was held in a large field just without one of the gates of the city. “ The buyers at first look at the horses in their slow pace, then in a quicker, and in

their gallop. When the course, of such and of others, which in their kind are both good for carriage, and quick for running, is about to begin, a shout is raised, and the common horses are ordered aside. The riders are boys. Sometimes three together, sometimes only two, prepare themselves for the strife; skilled to govern their horses, they rule the mouths of the wild creatures with sharp bitted bridles, avoiding especially lest one get before another. The horses also, after their manner, hold themselves up for the contest; their joints tremble; impatient of delay, they cannot stand still: the signal being given, they extend their limbs, hurry over the course, borne along with eager agility. The riders, striving from the love of praise and the hope of victory, apply the spur to the free horses, urging them no less with whips, and exciting them with cries. You would think everything in motion, according to Heraclitus, and that Zeno's opinion that nothing moves nor passes through space, is false altogether."

I shall omit the description of the cattle market, and proceed to give Fitz-Stephen's account of the trade, and internal government of London in his day. "To this city, from every nation under heaven, merchants carry on a commerce by sea: Arabia sends gold; the Sabæan spices and frankincense; the Scythian arms; the prolific soil of Babylon sends oil from its rich wood of palms.* The Nile furnishes precious stones: the East Indies purple garments; Norway and Russia, vair, fur and sables; the French their wines. According to chronicles of authority it is older than the city of Rome. Both were from the same Trojan stock, this, however, being built by Brute be-

* I have found some difficulty in translating this part of Fitz-Stephen's account, which is not written in the best latinity; but I suspect that the whole passage in the copy I have, is wrongly stopped. It is there written thus: "Arma Scythes, oleum palmarum divite silva. Pingue solum, Babylon, &c.", which is mere nonsense.

fore that was built by Romulus and Remus. Whence probably their ancient customs and laws were so much the same. Thus in a similar manner London is divided into regions (or wards), has annual sheriffs instead of Consuls, has a Senatorial dignity, and inferior magistrates, has sewers and aqueducts in the highways. All sorts of causes, deliberative, demonstrative and judicial, have their proper places of judgment and separate courts ; the council has its meetings on appointed days. I do not think there is any city where there are more orderly customs of visiting churches, honouring the ordinances of God, observing holydays,* giving alms, showing hospitality, keeping engagements, contracting espousals, celebrating nuptials, ornamenting festivals, cheering guests, even in performing funerals, and inhuming the dead. The sole plagues of London are the immoderate drinking of fools, and frequent fires. Besides, almost all Bishops, Abbots, and nobles of England are, as it were, citizens and freemen of London, having there fine houses where they resort, and incur great expenses, being called thither to councils and important assemblies by the King or their metropolitan, or drawn by their own business."

The sports and pastimes of the citizens afford Fitz-Stephen a still more ample field for description. "Instead of theatrical spectacles and scenic plays, London has holier plays, namely, representations of Miracles wrought by saintly confessors ; or of the sufferings by which the constancy of the martyrs was made manifest. Besides, every year on carnival day—that we may begin with the sports of children, for we have all been children once—the boys of a school bring to their schoolmaster fighting cocks, and all the forenoon is given up to the sport of seeing these cocks fight in the schools. After dinner, all the youths of

* The words are "festis feriandis," which might be translated more ways than one.

the city go forth into the fields to play at ball. The scholars of each school have their ball, and the men of every craft of the city have their ball in their hands. The elder people, the fathers, and more wealthy citizens come out on horseback to witness the exercises of the youth," &c. &c.

" On every Sunday of Lent, after dinner, a troop of fresh youth goes out into the fields, mounted on war horses and on horses fit for the course, every one of which has been taught to run in the circle. The lay sons of the citizens burst out of the gates in bands, furnished with lances and military shields, the younger ones having their lances deprived of the iron ; they now offer an image of war, and exercise themselves in military strife. Many come from the court when the King is in the neighbourhood, and also the youth of Earls' and Barons' families not yet possessed of the baldric, striving for military repute. The hope of victory fires them all ; the horses neigh, their joints shake, they bite their bits, and impatient of delay they cannot stand still : when at length they beat the sounding course with their hoofs, the youthful riders divided into troops, some press on those before them, but cannot overtake them, some throw down their fellows and fly past them.

" In Easter they represent as it were naval battles. A shield being strongly fixed upon the trunk of a tree planted in the midst of the river, a young man placed in the prow of a boat carried swiftly on by both oars and the current, tries to strike the shield with his lance. If in striking it he breaks the spear and remains himself unmoved, he accomplishes his purpose, and has obtained his object : but if the lance remains unbroken when strongly struck, he is cast into the passing stream, the boat by its motion being carried away from him. There are, however, not far off from the shield, two stationary boats filled with young men, in order to take the unfortunate spearman out of the water, either when plunged in, or when he first appears again at

the top. On the bridge, and in the galleries above the river, stand the spectators, prepared for much laughter. On holydays throughout the whole summer, the youth exercise themselves in sports with leaping, with the bow, with wrestling, with casting of stones, in throwing javelins with thongs beyond a limit, and with the warlike buckler.* Bands of maidens beat the earth with free foot, even until moonlight. In winter almost every holyday before dinner either the foaming boars fight for their heads, and hogs armed with terrible teeth are given over for bacon, or fat bulls or immense bears fight with the dogs that are let loose upon them. When that large marsh which extends on the north side of the city walls is frozen, thick crowds of youths go out to sport upon the ice. Some gaining more rapid motion by a run, with their feet apart and turned sideways, slide over a great space. Others make for themselves seats of ice like great mill-stones; many running before with their hands joined, draw him who sits thereon; some slipping with their feet in such rapidity of motion all fall on their faces. Others are more skilful in sports upon the ice, and fitting to the foot and tying on the shoes, bones, that is to say, the leg-bones of animals, and holding in their hands staves shod with sharp iron, with which they sometimes strike the ice, are borne on with velocity like that of a bird flying, or of a bolt from a cross-bow. Sometimes also, two of these come by agreement, from a great distance apart, against one another, they meet with great force, they stretch

* I have thus translated the words "parmis duellionum," by which Stephanides probably meant practice with broadsword and buckler, always a favourite sport with our ancestors. In the sentence that follows, I have rather deviated from my author's exact words, as the good monk might by them give an impression which his whole account of London and its customs shows he did not mean. He says, in his inflated manner, speaking of the young women of the capital, "Puellarum Cytherea dicit choros etc."

forth their staves, they strike one another mutually. One or both fall not without bodily harm, for after the fall they are carried far from one another, and wherever the head touches the ice, it is all bruised and flayed. Many break a leg or arm if they happen to fall."

Such, according to Fitz-Stephen, were the sports of the good citizens of London in the days immediately preceding the reign of Richard Cœur de Lion. Barbarous they certainly were, but the times in every respect harmonized with them, and the first Norman king, as well as his immediate successors, rather added to, than diminished, the barbarism of the land which he subdued. In the character of William the conqueror, the barbarism of the times displayed itself in his fierceness and relentless severity. William Rufus, without the powers of his father, had all his despotic sternness, and superadded the licentiousness of the barbarian. In these respects the Anglo-Saxons had been comparatively civilized, for there is probably in modern history no parallel to the frenzied debaucheries of the second king of the Norman race and the horde of barbarians with which he filled his palace, except in the reign of the infamous Henry III. of France. Each had his minions, and the effeminate dapiers of William Rufus bear but too strict a resemblance, both in the nature and extent of their crimes, to the painted followers of the French tyrant. In order, it would seem, to allow more scope for the horrors of the royal orgies, lights were forbidden in the palace of the Norman after nightfall, and darkness covered vices on which we cannot dwell.

Every sort of licentiousness was practised under the second monarch after the conquest; and when Henry I. took possession of the throne, his coming was hailed as affording a prospect both of a deliverance from oppression, and a reformation of morals, though his own life exhibits a picture of continual indulgence in criminal amours, which not even his keen sense of policy could restrain. His un-

happy son William, the immediate cause of whose death was an act of generous affection of which he left but too few on record, was at the early age of eighteen already overwhelmed by vices horrible and degrading, so that though the father mourned in bitterness of heart for the loss of his child, the nation could hardly regret a prince, whose overbearing disposition and early depravity, promised a maturity as terrible as that of his uncle of the same name.

Though the subject be so dark and painful, it has seemed necessary to say thus much on the vices of our Norman kings, because the character of the monarchs that succeeded, and of the house of Plantagenet in general, cannot be duly estimated unless contrasted with that of the sovereigns who preceded them. Thus Henry II. himself and several of his successors, taken individually, appear far from deserving the praise of moral life ; but when we compare the period which succeeded the accession of the second Henry, with that which went before, we shall find a vast improvement in morals, notwithstanding several striking instances of licentiousness.

No regular rule of succession to the throne of England was observed till the reign of Henry II.; and indeed, even in private families, the law of inheritance seems to have been ill defined or ill observed. William the Conqueror, however, *if* we may believe that the words put into his mouth on his death-bed by various historians were really spoken by him, seems to have pointed out the rule of primogeniture as the one he recognised, even while he conveyed the throne of England to William Rufus, as far as he could convey that which he himself, in truth, held only by his sword. “ Normandy,” he said, “ he had received from his fathers, and therefore that, as his paternal inheritance, he left to his eldest son.” Might continued to make right, however ; and Henry I., after having seized the crown of England, stripped his brother Robert of his undoubted do-

minions, and by a base violation of confidence and honour, confined him in a prison, of which death alone unclosed the doors. The plunderer of his brother, being suddenly deprived of his son William by the wreck of the vessel which was bearing the Prince to England,* had only one legitimate child left, a daughter, who had first been named Alice, but had afterwards assumed the name of Matilda, and married the emperor Henry IV.† The desire of seating one of his own posterity on the throne, and the difficulty of securing the crown to his daughter, induced the king of England to marry his second wife, named Adelais, whose youth seemed to afford a prospect of numerous issue. Their bed, however, was unfruitful, and in the end he determined to settle the crown on his daughter the empress Matilda.

Although her husband was now dead, Matilda was very unwilling to leave her adopted country, and the English barons were not well disposed to allow the sceptre to be placed in a female hand; but Henry overcame the repugnance of both, and, in a general assembly of the clergy and

* The Prince was following his father to England in a vessel called the White Ship, accompanied by his natural brother Richard, and their sister Adela, with a hundred and forty knights and sixteen ladies of noble birth. They spent several hours in drunkenness and debauchery before they weighed anchor; and some of the party, seeing the state of the crew, retired to land, and thus saved themselves. The ship was then unmoored, but in the confusion drifted on a ledge of rock not far from Barfleur, and immediately began to sink. The Prince got speedily into a boat, and was rowing for the land when the cries of his sister Adela caught his ear, and he returned to save her. The moment he approached the ship, multitudes poured into the boat, which immediately sunk as well as the ship. Only one person was saved from the wreck, who clung during the whole night to the top of a mast which appeared above water.

† It was not at all uncommon in those days, thus to change what is called the christian name. A similar alteration had been made by the mother of Matilda, whose name was originally Edith.

nobles, Matilda was declared next in succession to the crown of England. It is to be remarked, that at this meeting were present, besides David king of Scotland, maternal uncle of the Princess, her cousin Stephen Count of Boulogne, the son of Adela, daughter of the conqueror, and also Robert, Earl of Gloucester, Matilda's half brother, a natural son of her father Henry. Between these two noblemen immediately arose a dispute regarding precedence in the assembly, and it has been supposed, that Robert of Gloucester, foreseeing that Matilda's title would ultimately be contested, looked with ambition towards the crown itself, as a prize which perhaps might fall to his lot, in an age when bastardy was not regarded as an insuperable bar, in all cases, of feudal succession. To be declared next to Matilda might have secured a distinct claim upon the crown itself; for if his illegitimacy did not affect his relation to Stephen of Boulogne, it could not be supposed to affect his position in regard to the succession. If he acted upon such considerations, the danger was obviated by the decision of the barons, who maintained that the claim of legitimacy was superior to that of proximity, and assigned the first place to Stephen, whose ultimate views undoubtedly extended to the crown.

In the various struggles and contentions which had convulsed Normandy, under the sons of the Conqueror, Fulk, named Plantagenet,* Count of Anjou, had taken a frequent part. Henry I. had studiously courted that Prince, who had obtained much renown as a soldier, and who being called to the distant throne of Jerusalem about this time,

* From the genêt, or broom-tree, which his family bore as their device. I find the term *Plante de genêt* given as the origin of the appellation assumed by the house of Anjou; but the name of this shrub is much more simply put as *Plante à genêt*, which was not at all an uncommon form in the French of that day, and is still retained in such expressions as *arbre à fruit*, *batteau à voiles*, &c.

resigned his European dominions to his son Geoffrey, a rash, hot-headed, violent youth. To the young Count, Henry had already proposed the hand of his daughter, and he now urged on the match, promising him, it would seem, the immediate investiture of Normandy. In this scheme the King had to contend once more with the reluctance of his daughter, and the disapprobation of his vassals, who were strongly averse to the union of their future Queen with the young Count of Anjou. Henry, however, persevered, and Matilda was married to Geoffrey, notwithstanding the murmurs of the Anglo-Norman barons, from whom the conclusion of the treaty was concealed as long as possible. Geoffrey acted as a boy of sixteen might be expected to act—quarrelled with his wife and father-in-law, and left neither of them any peace during several years. But the purpose of Henry was so far accomplished, that Matilda bore three sons to her husband, and male posterity was thus secured.

To place the succession of his daughter and her children beyond all doubt, the King engaged his barons to take an oath of fealty to her after her marriage with Geoffrey; and again, on the birth of Henry, her eldest son, that oath was renewed to the young Prince as heir to the crown. In all these acts, Stephen, Count of Boulogne, took part, and bound himself by the most solemn ties to support the throne of Matilda. Though naturally and habitually a suspicious man, Henry I., to his credit be it spoken, retained some faith in human gratitude and honour; and he does not seem to have entertained the slightest apprehension that either the strong tie of benefits received and conferred which ought to have bound his nephew to him, or the solemn vow which the Count of Boulogne had taken to Matilda, would ever be broken.

Stephen himself was one of four brothers, the sons, as we have seen, of Adela, daughter of the Conqueror, and the

count of Blois. The distribution of the Count's patrimony after his death shows one of the strange anomalies which occasionally took place in the feudal system at an early period, and proves, by a striking example, how weakly established was the right of primogeniture at this time. It was Theobald, the second son of the Count, who succeeded to the territory of Blois ; the eldest son, William, having become Count of Solieu by his marriage with the heiress of that fief. The two other sons, Stephen and Henry, derived their elevation from the kindness and affection of their uncle, the King of England. The youngest he gradually raised from monastic seclusion to the important Bishopric of Winchester ; and Stephen, the third son of his sister, he married to the heiress of the Count of Boulogne, after bestowing on him numerous estates, both in England and Normandy.

In him Henry trusted that his daughter would find strong support ; and in that confidence, the King remained in Normandy, to guard the Duchy against some rash though perhaps not unjustifiable attempts of his son-in-law Geoffrey. He was still there, when either excess or some accidental cause cast him into a fever, and he soon felt that the termination of his long and eventful career was approaching. On his death-bed, he solemnly declared it to be his will, that the kingdom of England, as well as the duchy of Normandy, should descend to his daughter Matilda, and in direct succession to her legitimate posterity. He did not leave any portion of his territories to Geoffrey of Anjou ; nor did he seem to contemplate any material opposition to the immediate elevation of his daughter. Shortly after this solemn ratification of that order of succession which he had previously established, he died, leaving his illegitimate son, Robert of Gloucester, to manage the affairs of Normandy for the Empress, till she could be called from

Anjou, to which province she had lately gone with her husband.

In favour of Matilda's claim, there was much to be urged ; her father's will, the oaths of the Barons, her immediate proximity in blood to the last king, and her clear descent from the Anglo-Saxon monarchs of England ; for though she was not the direct heir of the last of those monarchs, she was yet quite near enough to succeed according to the Saxon rule. Against her, but one objection was to be urged—that she was a woman ; and though it could be shown that in all ordinary cases of feudal succession, old rules had been done away, and a female succeeded to her father's lands unopposed by collateral males ; yet hers was the first instance where a crown was in dispute ; and the objection was sufficiently strong to induce Stephen to determine at once upon contesting with her the throne of England, notwithstanding the oaths of all the Barons of the land, notwithstanding his own repeated vows, and notwithstanding the ties of gratitude, which ought to have bound him to support her with all his strength.

The way was prepared before the Count of Boulogne by the perfidy of his brother, the Bishop of Winchester ; who, as we have before said, had been raised by Henry I., from the low state of a Cluniac monk, to one of the most important dignities of the English church, and had been covered with benefits and obligations of all kinds. Not the slightest doubt can exist, that the Bishop had laboured effectually to dispose the minds of many persons in favour of his brother ; and there is even reason to suppose, that if he did not actually suggest to Stephen his design upon the crown, he confirmed him in his determination of contesting the succession with Matilda.

No sooner then did the news of the King's death reach the ears of the Count of Boulogne, than he set sail from Whitsand for the shores of England, determined to oppose

both by arms and deceit the claims of the daughter of his uncle and benefactor.

A thousand circumstances combined to render the just pretensions of that Princess unsuccessful. She herself was absent in Anjou at the time of her father's death. Her attached and talented brother, Robert, Earl of Gloucester, was detained in Normandy, by the task of executing Henry's will regarding that province ; and almost all those on whose faith and attachment she had the best reason to rely for the security of her insular dominions, proved false and treacherous, abandoning her cause at the appearance of a rival, and selling their faith to the first bidder.

Amongst those that most disgraced themselves by treachery and ingratitude, was Roger, Bishop of Salisbury, who owed even more to the father of Matilda, than Stephen himself, or the Bishop of Winchester. He had been taken from the low station of a Norman curate, and without any claim whatever, had been raised successively by the mere bounty of Henry, to the posts and dignities of Chancellor, Bishop of Salisbury, and Grand Justiciary. In the latter quality, he was the natural Protector and Regent of the Kingdom upon the demise of the Crown : he held all the power, and all the authority of the state ; and had he remained faithful to the duties imposed upon him both by his situation, and by the will of his master, Stephen's attempt must have been frustrated in the outset. He, however, was one of the first to betray Matilda and go over to her enemies ; and for this act, he met, at an after period, not only a just, but an appropriate punishment.

It is not to be doubted, that the defection of the Grand Justiciary was owing to the suggestions and temptations of the Bishop of Winchester, one of the most remarkable men of his age : unprincipled, dissolute, and careless of every moral duty ; but bold, politic, decided, and endowed with the rare and valuable talent of guiding, directing, and unit-

ing a great party. The Bishop of Salisbury was also a man of considerable ability, and was particularly distinguished by his skill in finance. Though by no means a moral or religious man, he had not shown any very marked and offensive neglect of his duties as a churchman and a minister, in an age when the license and debauchery of the clergy was probably at its height.

A third prelate speedily brought over to the party of Stephen, was William, Archbishop of Canterbury, a person of a weak mind, destitute of all firmness and resolution, who had long been under the influence of the Bishop of Winchester, and was accustomed to yield to him in every thing. So much indeed was this the case, that he could not refrain from following his guidance, even on occasions where it is distinctly proved that he knew the wrong he was committing.

Notwithstanding all the preparations which had been made to ensure success to the enterprise of Stephen, he met with two rebuffs on his arrival in England, which might have checked the career of a less bold and ambitious man. Dover, then important as a fortress, refused to give him admission ; and Canterbury, a large, wealthy, and distinguished town, shut her gates against the usurper. He hastened on, however, towards the capital undismayed ; and in the City of London was received with joy and gratulation. His purpose was now no longer disguised. Educated in England, renowned in arms, liberal, courteous, affable, wherever Stephen was known, he was popular with all classes ; and the citizens of the metropolis hastened to testify their affection, by proclaiming him King of England.

Stephen then proceeded to Winchester, where a reception as gratifying awaited him, and where voices, in those days more important than the acclamations of any town, were to be sought and won. These were the voices of the

clergy and nobility of the realm ; and the previous exertions of the Bishop of Winchester now began to show their fruit. The usurper was here met by the Archbishop of Canterbury, by the Bishop of Salisbury, and by a person whose co-operation was most important to the success of his enterprise :—namely, William du Pont de l'Arche, to whom jointly, it would appear, with the Bishop of Salisbury, Henry I. had entrusted his immense treasure.

It is probable that a part of this treasure might of right appertain to the nation ; but undoubtedly the greater part was Henry's own private property, which should have fallen to Matilda by every principle of law and justice. The false guardians, however, to whom it had been entrusted, instantly gave it up to her rival ; and with her own money Stephen proceeded to buy her own subjects. The Bishop of Salisbury was rewarded by a donation of the town of Malmesbury, and by the appointment of his illegitimate son to the post of Chancellor ; while his nephew, the Bishop of Ely, was created Treasurer ; and had he demanded ten times more, there can be no doubt that he would have obtained it ; for Stephen's situation, and the power of the Bishop, rendered the Prince's sincerity unquestionable, when he said, in speaking of that prelate, “ By the Nativity of God, if he were to ask me for one half my kingdom, I would grant it to him, *till this season be past.*”

The same views which moved the Bishop of Salisbury brought many other nobles and prelates round the usurper, though the great body of the nobility came so slowly, that Stephen might well entertain some apprehensions. The Archbishop, too, was not without scruples in regard to the oath of fealty three times taken to Matilda ; and others might feel the same hesitation. An expedient was easily found for removing this difficulty. Ingratitude, treason, and breach of trust, had gone before ; a little perjury was now the only thing required ; and Hugh Bigod, Earl of

Norfolk, Steward of the Household, was brought forward to swear that Henry on his death-bed had declared his vassals free of the oaths they had taken to Matilda and her son. Stephen found greater facility after this impudent falsehood was promulgated ; and though we cannot follow him step by step through his career, it may be necessary to say that he was crowned upon certain promises regarding the rights of the Barons, and the privileges and authority of the church.

The ceremony took place on the 22d December, 1135, just twenty days after the death of Henry the First : in the beginning of the following year, the body of the deceased King was brought to England for interment ; and Stephen hastened to show every mark of reverence to the corpse of him whose living will he had set at nought. He afterwards proceeded to Oxford, and there announced to a great assembly of the nobility and clergy, that his title to the throne of England had been confirmed by the Papal authority. He renewed about the same time all his oaths and promises, pledging himself not to retain in his hands those bishoprics and abbeys which might become vacant during his reign, to restore the old laws, and to abolish many of the restrictions which had been placed upon the rights of chase. There is a curious reservation in this oath, however, as he ends by declaring, “that he grants the whole, with a saving to his just and royal dignity.”*

The Nobles and the Clergy renewed to him their oaths in return ; but in the engagements of the Clergy we find a saving clause also which many of the lay Barons likewise inserted. They only promised that they would be faithful to him while he preserved the liberties of the Church, and the vigour of discipline ; and such vague expressions of

* His words are :—“*Hæc omnia concedo et confirmo. Salva regia et justa dignitate mea.*”

course left the oaths little better than empty air : if indeed Stephen could, under any circumstances, regard the pledges of men who had so lately broken a vow three times repeated, as aught but a mere mockery.

While all these events were taking place, the Empress Matilda had in the first instance gone on unconscious of the treachery of her cousin ; had entered Normandy from Anjou, and had been received without opposition ; but her condition even in Normandy was soon changed. She herself was arrogant, presumptuous and violent. Geoffrey showed himself capricious, rash, and tyrannical. What the Normans might have borne from their native princess, they would not bear from her foreign husband. Great excesses, it would seem, marked his entrance into the province, and the people rose and drove him out at the point of the spear.

News now reached Normandy of Stephen's usurpation of the crown of England, while the Norman Barons, disgusted with the conduct both of Matilda and Geoffrey, were preparing to dispose of the Ducal wreath to some person more worthy of respect. The emissaries of Stephen took advantage of the moment, to urge the claims of their master, and to set forth the evil consequences of separating Normandy from England. Their reasoning was effectual, and the Barons consented to acknowledge him as Duke ; although he was very far from obtaining possession of the whole Duchy, as a result of this recognition, which we shall presently have occasion to show more at large.

As Lord Lyttleton has justly observed, “Stephen neither knew how to govern as a lawful king or a tyrant ;” and while he permitted, and pledged himself to permit, his turbulent Barons to fortify themselves in castles, which rendered his authority nearly unavailing, he gave them high subject of dissatisfaction, by introducing into his dominions many of those bands of foreign mercenaries, which at that time were springing up in the north of Europe. It so

happened that, at the same period, a man was found worthy to command such troops ; though it is but just to acknowledge that Stephen possessed chivalrous qualities, which make us wonder at his selection of a person every way so infamous as William of Ipres. That leader was the illegitimate descendant of one of the Sovereigns of Flanders, and had been deeply implicated in the murder of his own first cousin, Count of that country, called Charles the Good. His guilt seems to have been proved beyond all doubt ; and, driven forth from his native country and his possessions, by the indignation of the King of France, he had put himself at the head of various troops of adventurers ; and now sold his services and theirs to the usurping King of England. General indignation was excited in the nation, by the introduction of such troops under such a leader ; and whether it was in Normandy or in England that William of Ipres appeared, he was sure to be met by the opposition of the British and Norman Barons. The mercenary leader nevertheless increased daily in the favour of the King, monopolizing a great part of the bounties of that monarch ; and had Stephen followed his advice, that prince, though he certainly would not thereby have done his cause any service with those who were anxious to see their country governed according to law and justice, would, in all probability, have secured his power as a tyrant and usurper ; for there can be no doubt that the councils of William of Ipres would have removed from the King's path the Earl of Gloucester, and many other Nobles, supposed or known to be disaffected.

Stephen did not, however, pursue the line of conduct pointed out ; and after having visited Normandy, and endeavoured to render his hold upon that duchy more firm, the King returned to England, called back by incursions on his northern frontier, which threatened to shake his throne itself. These were attacks made by David, King of Scotland,

under the pretence of serving his niece, the Empress ; but if we may judge from the result, more with a view to plunder and conquest on his own account, than to the benefit of his relation.

We shall not pursue these insignificant wars, nor the desultory struggles which Stephen maintained with some of his Barons ; but shall proceed at once to notice the general causes which prepared the way for the return of Matilda to England. At the outset of his career, in chastising refractory nobles, and in punishing even remarkable criminals, Stephen showed a degree of lenity which was impolitic from its excess. The consequences were such as might be expected : his authority was despised, and when at length he proceeded to exercise vigour, which he did with the same indiscretion that he had formerly shown in his clemency, he was naturally accused of injustice and oppression. Liberal of promises, his promises were never kept ; and in every respect he disappointed those who had supported him. At the same time the natural versatility of popular affection abandoned the successful monarch, and the eyes of men, either reasonably or unreasonably dissatisfied, turned towards the absent princess, whom they had before neglected.

To complete the measure of his imprudence, Stephen became irritable under the discontent he saw growing around him. Intrigues, as he well knew, were opened with Matilda ; those who did not actually promise her support, did not fail to vent their murmurs in such a manner as to reach her ears ; many were really disposed to break the oaths they had taken to Stephen, as well as those they had broken to Matilda, and many others Stephen suspected who probably were not guilty. A coolness had risen up between him and his brother, the Bishop of Winchester. The Bishop of Salisbury, who might be said to have placed him on the throne, did not enjoy under Ste-

phen that authority he had possessed under Henry ; the Clergy were dissatisfied on account of many evasions which appeared in the execution of the royal promises ; and it only wanted some violent aggression on the part of the King, to rouse that important body against him.

The aggression soon took place. Instigated by his own apprehensions and suspicions, not less than by the suggestions of his foreign favourites, the King learnt to regard the Bishop of Salisbury as a concealed and dangerous enemy. It is probable, indeed, that the Prelate and his relations did hold some communication with Matilda ; but instead of attempting by moderate means to frustrate any machinations against himself, or to win back to his interest the disaffected churchmen, Stephen, to crush their intrigues, and to punish their falling off, determined rashly upon an act which was certain to array the whole body of the English Church against him, if it did not even call down upon his head the thunders of the Roman see.

Upon a frivolous pretence, he caused the Bishops of Salisbury and Lincoln to be arrested in the town of Oxford. The Bishop of Ely had been marked out for the same fate ; but warned in time, he fled to Devizes, in the strong castle of which town he prepared to resist the authority of the King. By order of Stephen, the Bishop of Salisbury having been kept without food, was brought in a famishing condition under the walls of Devizes, and shown to his nephew, who was at the same time informed that his relation and benefactor would be subjected to the terrible death of starvation, unless the place was immediately given up to the royal troops.

This intimation produced the intended effect ; the castle surrendered, and all the towns which the Bishop and his family possessed fell into the hands of the King.

As a natural consequence, the highest degree of indignation was excited in the Clergy throughout the country.

The Bishop of Winchester himself earnestly and repeatedly entreated his brother to abandon measures of so dangerous a tendency, to restore the surrendered towns and castles to the Bishops, and to remove by concession, the prejudicial impression which his violent conduct had produced. All persuasions failed, however, and as a Legate of the Roman church, with which dignity he was now invested, the Bishop of Winchester summoned a synod to take into consideration the act which had been committed. Against this synod Stephen appealed to the Pope, and forced his brother to dissolve the assembly, by means very nearly approaching to violence. The Bishop of Winchester was of course offended and angry, and now found himself arrayed against his brother by the very acts of Stephen himself.

Such was the state of the King's affairs in England, when Matilda, who had remained more than three years apparently without a chance of forming a party in her father's territories, set sail for this country, accompanied by her brother, Robert Earl of Gloucester, and one hundred and forty knights. The Earl indeed had added his name to the roll of Barons who swore fealty to Stephen at Oxford; but in the oath he took he expressly stipulated that he should be no longer bound by it, than so long as Stephen kept his engagements with him, and maintained to him his dignity uninjured and entire. Stephen, however, had given him fully sufficient cause to doubt his security at the English court, and he had consequently remained at a distance, watching the progress of events, and preparing to take advantage of the first favourable conjuncture to assert the claims of his sister to the crown.

Matilda and her brother reached the shores of Sussex on the 30th September, 1139, and were kindly received by Adelais, the Queen-dowager. That Princess had married the Earl of Sussex after her first husband's death, but had

always preserved a tender regard for Henry's child, and had kept up a secret correspondence with her during her exile. The gates of Arundel castle, which was then in her possession, were thrown open to the Empress and her followers; and there the Earl of Gloucester left his sister, trusting that the strength of the place would enable her to resist all the efforts of Stephen till he could raise an army and march to her relief. The journey which he himself then undertook was most perilous, for a wide tract of country lay between Arundel and Bristol, in the neighbourhood of which city the Earl's chief partizans were to be found; and the intervening space was thickly covered with the friends and supporters of Stephen.

Partly, it is supposed, by the connivance and aid of the Bishop of Winchester himself, partly by the prompt and vigorous assistance of Bryan Fitz-Comte, Constable of Wallingford castle, Robert of Gloucester, pursuing by-paths and unfrequented roads, made his way across the country in safety. A great part of the west of England now declared in favour of Matilda, as well as Canterbury and Dover in the east; but on the other hand, Stephen marching with extreme rapidity from Marlborough to Arundel, laid siege to the castle, and might have captured his rival with ease. It was under these circumstances that the King, some say at the treacherous suggestion of his brother, some say from a spontaneous movement—a folly which is hardly credible—entered into a convention with Matilda, by virtue of which she was conveyed safely under an escort of his own troops, to join her brother at Bristol.

As soon as this extraordinary compact was executed, both parties took the field; but a great part of the nobility held aloof from both, and satisfied themselves with plundering and making war upon their neighbours. Various changes of fortune then occurred; but after a desultory struggle, a battle ensued, in which Stephen was taken prisoner. The

Clergy sided with Matilda ; the Barons did so likewise, though by no means universally ; and the citizens followed where the others led, with the exception of the inhabitants of London, who with laudable firmness maintained their faith to the sovereign they had chosen, as long as it was possible, and in the end gave but very faint tokens of acquiescence in the substitution of Matilda. The Bishop of Winchester, the brother of the imprisoned Prince, after some faint dalliance with the successful power, had likewise acceded, and affecting to blend justice to Matilda and the nation with a decent love for his brother, he admitted in full synod that Stephen had failed in all his engagements, and, therefore, that the people were free from the restraint of their oaths.

The character of the Empress was one in which the evil spots are more clearly seen under the full sunshine of success than in the dim twilight of adversity. All her arrogance and harshness of character now appeared, and she soon taught the people of England to regret Stephen and abhor herself. She insulted and injured the citizens of London, whose adherence to their oaths should but have excited her respect ; and in an outburst of popular feeling, excited by the sight of a small troop of horse belonging to a feeble party which the wife of Stephen had raised in his favour, the burgesses rose and rushed to besiege Matilda in her palace. She escaped them but by a few minutes, and with a small body of friends fled in haste to Oxford.

It would seem that the Bishop of Winchester was by this time disgusted with the party of the Empress, and was actually engaged in preparing for the restoration of his brother. An intimation that such was the case having been conveyed to the ears of Matilda, she determined to surprise him in Winchester ; but failing in that attempt, she endeavoured to get possession of his wealth, and of a fortress which he held in that city. While she was eagerly be-

sieging the latter, however, she was attacked by the Bishop and a large body of his adherents, and was in turn besieged by him. The fortunes of the day now became unfavourable to the Empress, and she was forced to fly, while her brother and a body of her most faithful friends attempted to cover her retreat, and sacrificed themselves for her safety. The Earl of Gloucester and several others were taken, many more were slain, and the rest escaped with the greatest difficulty ; but Matilda herself was placed in security by the gallant devotion of her friends, and reached the castle of Devizes after extraordinary fatigues.

Stephen's partisans treated Robert of Gloucester with much greater lenity than Matilda had shown towards the usurper ;* and after various negotiations, it was agreed that the brother of the Empress should be exchanged for the King. Thus when the two parties once more took the field against each other, they were very nearly in the same position in which they had commenced the war.

Though his situation seemed somewhat difficult, from the fact of his having served both parties, the Bishop of Winchester, formidable alike to each, easily prevailed upon Stephen to regard his late services as full compensation for his former defection. At the same time, to the people and the clergy he justified his political variations, in a manner not very complimentary to either of the candidates for the throne. He said, in effect, that although Stephen's conduct had been so bad as to induce him, notwithstanding their affinity, to abandon his cause, yet Matilda's had proved so much worse, that he was fully justified in quitting her party likewise. He added, moreover, that he had been

* By some we are told, that Matilda loaded Stephen with chains, and treated him with the utmost severity ; by others, equally worthy of credit, that the Earl of Gloucester "treated him with the greatest humanity," and "kept him in safe but gentle confinement :" which of these two statements is correct may be difficult to decide.

compelled by circumstances to support the Empress for a time, not led by inclination ; and that since then, God had manifestly shown his disapprobation of Matilda's cause, by the misfortunes with which he had visited her.

It is an extraordinary thing, that the quality of the human mind which seems the most completely independent of all adventitious aids—I mean common sense—should be found so very often wanting in barbarous ages. This reasoning on the part of the legate was received as perfectly satisfactory by a great part of his audience, and he proceeded with an unblushing face to adjure the clergy to excommunicate the supporters of her whom he had himself so lately served.

Before the struggle in the field, which had been for a time suspended, was fully renewed, Stephen fell dangerously ill. The Earl of Gloucester, with that penetration which always distinguished him, had long seen that the two parties in the country were too nearly balanced to admit a hope of speedy success to either unless some new elements could be thrown in, to give a preponderance to the one or the other ; and in the hope of gaining this point in favour of his sister Matilda, he had sent over deputies to entreat the presence of her husband in England. Geoffrey, however, refused even to treat upon the subject with any one but Matilda's brother; and the Earl, though unwillingly, now seized the time of Stephen's illness to hasten back to France, and beseech Geoffrey to come over to his wife's aid with all troops that he could levy.

Geoffrey's affection for Matilda, however, was but small ; and although he sometimes made a show of yielding to her appeal, and thus detained the Earl of Gloucester in Normandy for several months, he ultimately refused to accompany him back to England, but permitted him at his wife's request to carry over Henry, the eldest son of the Princess, in the hope of exciting some new interest in her favour.

Before the Earl left Normandy he aided the Count of

Anjou in gaining possession of a great part of that Duchy ; but towards the close of the year 1142, the progress which Stephen was making in England rendered it absolutely necessary for the Earl to fly to the aid of his sister. Matilda by this time was closely besieged in the castle of Oxford, where she soon found herself straitened for provisions ; and Gloucester setting sail as soon as he received intelligence of her situation, arrived soon after at Wareham on the coast of Dorsetshire, which was then an important city, belonging to himself. The castle, however, which had been taken by Stephen, was garrisoned with his troops ; and the Earl, anxious to draw the King from Oxford, besieged Wareham and Lulworth castles, and reduced the Isle of Portland, which had been fortified by the enemy. Finding, however, that nothing could induce Stephen to abandon the operations against Matilda, he determined to join the army which had been collected for her service at Wallingsford, issuing at the same time a summons for his own partisans to meet him at Cirencester. His force now increased every day, and he was marching rapidly to his sister's deliverance, when to his surprise and joy, he found that she had made her escape from Oxford, had passed through the midst of the hostile army during the night, had crossed the Thames, which she fortunately found frozen over, on foot, and after a long journey through the snow, had reached the Castle of Wallingford in safety.

The miraculous nature of this escape served Matilda nearly as much as a victory ; and the meeting with her brother and son increased her joy. The young prince was left under the care of the Earl of Gloucester, who, it would seem, during the rest of his life bestowed particular pains upon Henry's education. But neither for that nor any other occupation did Gloucester neglect the cause of his sister ; and after frustrating the King in various attempts, he attacked and totally defeated him in the neighbourhood of Wilton.

About the same time Geoffrey Plantagenet made himself master of Rouen, assisted in the siege, strange to say, by Louis King of France, and by a number of persons who had hitherto displayed the greatest zeal in the service of Stephen.

It was the character of this war, however, never to continue long favourable to one or the other of the two parties. If success in arms was obtained, the balance was soon restored, by some unexpected misfortune ; and scarcely had the battle of Wilton been gained, when one of the most faithful and talented of Matilda's followers, Milo, Earl of Hereford, was accidentally killed whilst hunting. One half, however, or nearly one half of the country, remained in the possession of the Empress ; and in that portion some degree of order and regularity was maintained, which was not the case in the rest of the kingdom. There rapine, murder, torture, pestilence, famine, and despair, raged amongst the people ; whilst a multitude of feudal lords, owning the authority of none, sanguinary, remorseless, and rapacious, dwelt within the walls of their well-guarded castles, and only issued forth to scourge with new devastation the miserable country round them.

Perhaps on the whole, at this period Matilda was in a better situation than her rival ; and Stephen, by the various violent acts which he committed, contributed to render his own position worse. He alienated the brave and remorseless Earl of Essex, and also estranged one who had served him well, Bigod, Earl of Norfolk. Several other noblemen of great power and influence were arrested by his orders and deprived of their castles ; and he gave much offence by various of his measures to that important body, the Clergy. His losses, however, were more than compensated by the attack and capture of the castle of Farringdon, under the very eyes of the Earl of Gloucester, who could do nothing to relieve it ; and this terrible blow to the cause of Matilda

was followed by the base defection of the Earl of Chester, as well as that of her own brother's youngest son. The town of Bedford was also taken by Stephen, and more than one half of Matilda's possessions and followers were lost in the space of a few months. Certain it is, that in all the transactions of these times, her overbearing arrogance, and violence of temper, did her more injury than the arms of her enemies ; and neither the mildness, the justice, the abilities, or the devotion of her brother, the Earl of Gloucester, could counterbalance the effects of her own unhappy disposition.

Her husband, the Count of Anjou, however, was now in possession of Normandy, and many of the faults which he had displayed in youth had been corrected by experience ; but hopeless of his wife's success in England, and anxious to see his eldest son, he besought the Earl of Gloucester to send the young Prince back to Normandy. With this request the Earl complied, though it would seem unwillingly ; and shortly after, Gloucester himself being attacked by fever, died in the month of November, 1146, leaving the cause of Matilda entirely hopeless. In the beginning of the following year, after a vain struggle to maintain her party in the kingdom, the Empress herself set sail, and abandoning England, took refuge with her husband in Normandy.

She left behind perhaps scarcely one person who loved her, and her absence was probably advantageous to her cause. Stephen's own disposition had been soured by reverses ; he had become jealous, suspicious, morose, inexorable. One by one, he drove many of the principal nobles into revolt, the chief of whom was that Earl of Chester, who had so lately abandoned the cause of Matilda. New injuries were offered to the Clergy, and quarrels ensued between the ambitious Bishop of Winchester and the Archbishop of Canterbury, in which Stephen took part, and soon brought upon his territories the evils of an interdict.

These events occupied the greater part of the next two years; and though in that time the hatred of the people towards Matilda had not decreased, yet the eyes of men began to turn towards her son Henry, who having now reached sixteen years of age, displayed the promise of great abilities, and already possessed many graces of person and demeanour. An invitation to return to England was accordingly sent to him; and many motives induced him to comply. He felt certain of support from the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury, who had now risen superior to the Bishop of Winchester; the Earls of Chester and Hereford, with the young Earl of Gloucester, called eagerly for his presence, and promised him their fealty; and his mother's uncle, David, King of Scotland, held out to him hopes of still more important assistance; though this was coupled with a demand, that he should not be disturbed in possession of the three Northern counties which he had obtained during the struggle between Stephen and Matilda. Everything promised him success; and escorted by a chosen body of troops, he landed on the coast of England—it is supposed in Dorsetshire; and proceeded to join the King of Scotland at Carlisle. From the hand of that monarch he received the honour of knighthood, and nothing was thought of during the winter months but the invasion of England.

Henry, however, had either accepted the invitation too soon, or his friends were timid or faithless. Stephen advanced with an army to York, and his son, Prince Eustace, made incursions upon the territories of the inimical Barons. David remained at Carlisle with a force strong enough to protect his own territories, but not sufficiently numerous to attempt the invasion of England. The noblemen who had promised Henry their full support failed to join him. The King of Scotland would not march without them; and Henry, after seeing great part of the year wasted in inactivity, returned to Normandy in 1150, though not till

he had created a strong interest in his favour amongst the Barons of England and Scotland.

His return to the continent was very soon followed by an act which affected the fortunes of Henry during his whole life ; and a few preliminary words are necessary in order to explain the events which succeeded. Not many years before, the well known Crusade under Louis the Young had taken place, the French King being moved to the enterprise both by remorse for some acts of inhuman barbarity which he had committed, and by the preaching of St. Bernard, one of the most singular and eloquent men of his age. Some years previous to the period of his taking the Cross, Louis had married Eleanor, eldest daughter of the Duke of Aquitaine, a princess of beauty, wit, and talent, eager passions and flexible principles ; who readily agreed to accompany her husband to the Holy Land, determined, as it would appear, from the very first, to turn the whole crusade into a matter of gallantry and amusement. She was accompanied by almost all the ladies of her court ; and certainly from the accounts we possess of the levity with which the expedition was undertaken and carried on, the result that followed might have been fairly anticipated.

In regard to this crusade I shall have more to relate hereafter. Suffice it to say at present that both the King of France and the Emperor, who had also taken the Cross, were deceived entirely by those whom they believed to be their friends. Louis was misled by guides, assailed unexpectedly at every turn by enemies ; and it was not till his forces were diminished in a lamentable degree, both by carnage and sickness, that he found a temporary shelter within the walls of Antioch. There, however, he was hospitably received by Raymond of Poitiers, the sovereign of that city, who was also uncle to Eleanor, the young wife of the French King.

If Louis found repose in Antioch from the fatigues and dangers of the march, his mind was not suffered to enjoy lengthened tranquillity. The levity of his wife's conduct, if we may not call it by a harsher name, soon troubled his domestic peace, and drove him from his place of temporary repose. Her uncle Raymond, one of the most accomplished men of his day, endeavoured, it would seem, to engage his niece in the views he entertained of extending his territories in the neighbourhood of Antioch, and, through her means, to obtain the assistance of Louis and his forces. What mode of persuasion the Prince of Antioch employed, we do not know; but it is certain that Louis became jealous of Raymond's favour with his Queen, and assured his council, that he had discovered a design on the part of the former to deprive him of Eleanor by force, to which scheme he asserted Eleanor throughout was a consenting party.

Whatever cause of jealousy might really exist in regard to Raymond of Poitiers, there can be no doubt whatever, if the concurring testimony of all the writers of the day may be believed, that Eleanor's incontinence, while in the east, was great and notorious. She is not only generally supposed to have entered into a criminal intrigue with her uncle, but she is accused of the same crime with a young convert from Mahommedism, and also with a Mahometan, named Saladin. In regard to the latter, however, it may be necessary to remark, that if the writers who made the charge, intended to designate the famous Saladin as the lover of Eleanor, they committed a great error; as it is proved by the Arabic, as well as the European writers, that not the slightest communication could ever have taken place between Saladin and the French princess; and even if it had, it must necessarily have been of a very innocent nature, as Saladin was at that time under eleven years of age. The fact of her incontinence, however, is placed beyond all doubt, by the testimony of William of Tyre, who would not

have perpetuated the scandal had not his vast means of information satisfied him of the truth of the tale.

However that may be, Louis was himself convinced of his wife's guilt; and, with all the intemperate fury of jealousy, he carried her forcibly out of Antioch in the midst of the night, and marched on as fast as possible to Jerusalem. From the holy city, Louis wrote to the famous Suger, Abbot of St. Denis, asking counsel as to how he should deal with Eleanor. Suger, whom he had left in France as Regent of the kingdom, and who was more a statesman than a prelate, replied by advising him strongly to smother his anger towards Eleanor, at least till his return to France; and the monarch wisely followed his advice. It was less easy, however, to make Eleanor forget her anger at the treatment she had received. Her husband had become hateful to her. She declared that she had married a monk and not a king; and she did all that was possible after her return to France for the purpose of driving Louis to propose or consent to a divorce.

In the meantime the prospects of Henry Plantagenet were daily becoming more bright. Before the absolute return of the King of France from the crusade, Robert, Count of Dreux, his brother, who had preceded him, endeavoured to raise a civil war in the land, for the purpose of deposing Louis. It would appear that Geoffrey, the father of Henry and husband of Matilda, strongly supported the power of the Regent Suger, and thus aided to save the crown for the king. Nevertheless, various causes into which it is not necessary to enter, induced Louis to espouse the cause of Stephen on his return, and to make preparations for depriving Geoffrey of the Duchy of Normandy, with the design, it would appear, of bestowing it upon Eustace, Stephen's son, who had married Constance, sister of the French monarch. Through the mediation of Suger, however, a treaty was concluded between the weak king of France, and

Geoffrey Plantagenet, by which Geoffrey agreed to make over Normandy itself to his son Henry, the King of France giving that prince full investiture thereof. On his part, Louis received the Norman vexin, and thus became pledged to support the family of Plantagenet in the Duchy of Normandy.

As soon as these points were settled, the king proceeded to the Duchy, and performed his part of the agreement, by formally giving it up to Henry and receiving his homage ; and on this occasion, it is supposed, the young Duke for the first time beheld Eleanor, Queen of France. He was destined, however, to be very soon in arms against her husband. That weak and unstable prince soon found occasion of quarrel against Geoffrey of Anjou ; and instead of attacking the father in his dominions, he attacked the son in those with which he had just invested him. Henry, however, was prepared to receive him ; but the war passed off without any remarkable action, and the King of France had the mortification of being obliged to retire from Arques, before his own vassal, at the head of a superior force.

A treaty of peace succeeded ; and in the autumn of the year 1151, Geoffrey of Anjou died of a fever, leaving to Henry, his eldest son, besides the duchy of Normandy, with which he was already invested, the three remaining counties of Anjou, Touraine, and Maine, comprising one of the richest and most beautiful districts in France. In order to do homage for these new possessions, Henry was once more obliged to visit the court of France ; and there he again met with Eleanor, the wife of the French King. It is asserted that on these occasions that Princess became fascinated with the demeanour and appearance of Henry Plantagenet, and conceived for him the passion which afterwards terminated in their union. Whether this might or might not increase her efforts for a divorce, I cannot tell ;

but at all events, she employed every means to urge that step upon the King. There can be no doubt that her marriage with Louis, her fourth cousin, was contrary to the canons of the Roman Church ; and Eleanor took advantage of the fact to press upon the timid conscience of Louis, that they were living in a state of incest, their marriage never having been legalized by a dispensation from Rome.

Louis, on his part, had long entertained a wish to separate from his criminal wife, who, it must be remembered, had brought no male heirs to the throne of France : but motives of policy had hitherto restrained him ; for Eleanor had brought him as her dower the vast duchy of Aquitaine, which comprised a large portion of the south of France, and the evil consequences of suffering such an inheritance to become the prize of any new suitor, had been laid before Louis in the strongest language, by his great minister Suger. That minister, however, died on the thirteenth of January, 1152 : and immediately after, Louis, calling a council at Beaugency, laid before them his scruples regarding the consanguinity of Eleanor and himself, together with the fact that no dispensation had been received from the Pope. The Clergy pronounced the marriage null ; the sentence was confirmed by Papal authority ; and Louis, who had no pretence for keeping possession of the territories which Eleanor had brought him in marriage, immediately resigned to her the duchy of Aquitaine, and all its dependencies.

Eleanor, who had most likely already fixed upon her future husband, set off with all speed for her duchy ; and so great, in those days, was the desire of wealth and the carelessness of reputation, that both the nephew of Stephen, now become Count of Blois, and a younger brother of Henry, Geoffrey Plantagenet, endeavoured to stop this fair Prosperine in her course, and make her a bride by force. The first laid an ambush at Tours—the second somewhere far-

ther on ; but Eleanor contrived to escape both, and as soon as she arrived in Aquitaine, dispatched a messenger to Henry, giving him notice that she was ready to become his wife.

It is probable that this was not the first intimation of her feelings which he had received ; her call at all events found him ready and willing ; and he immediately set off to join her at Poitiers, where they were married with somewhat indecent haste, within six weeks after her divorce from her former husband.

This marriage surprised and incensed Louis not a little ; but the deed was done ; and Henry Plantagenet had added, by his marriage with Eleanor, the Duchy of Aquitaine, to Maine, Anjou, Touraine, and Normandy.

The indignation of Louis, or rather his mortification and disappointment, induced him to seek confederates amongst his own vassals, in order to make war upon Henry, who, in fact, had injured him in nothing. In Anjou he stirred up against that Prince his young brother Geoffrey ; and, leaguing himself at the same time with the other disappointed suitor for Eleanor's hand, with Eustace, the son of Stephen, King of England, and with his own rebellious brother the Count of Dreux, he attacked the frontiers of Normandy, and laid siege to Neufmarché.

It is probable that the confederates imagined that Henry had quitted Normandy, for since his marriage with Eleanor he had been collecting troops to assert his right to the throne of England, and had reached Barfleur for the purpose of embarking. The news of the invasion of his territories reached him there, however, and immediately altering his course, he took the field against Louis, at the head of a brilliant and chivalrous army. Neufmarché he could not save, for either from weakness or treachery it had surrendered before his arrival ; but he drove the French out of Normandy, and punished the King of France by ravaging

his territories before his face ; after which he proceeded into Anjou, and suppressed the insurrection which had been raised by his brother.

On his return, which was speedy, he found that Normandy had been again attacked ; but Henry was ready to act promptly against his assailants ; the Norman Barons supported him vigorously, and willingly ; Louis fell ill of a fever ; his army mouldered away ; and the overtures for peace which were made by the young Duke of Normandy were gladly received by the French King, who was by this time heartily weary of a war in which he had reaped little but disgrace. A truce was accordingly concluded, and negotiations were entered upon for the arrangement of a more durable peace.

Henry, in the meanwhile, rewarded with great discrimination and liberality the Barons who had shown their attachment to him in the late war ; and the wisdom of such conduct soon became apparent, for no sooner did he attempt to renew the expedition to England, than he found himself once more threatened with war from the side of France. In this instance Louis was actuated by the solicitations of his brother-in-law, Eustace, the son of Stephen, who was now so peculiarly situated, that it was of the utmost importance to him and to his father that Henry should be delayed in Normandy, even for a few weeks. It may be necessary, however, to show the circumstances by which the tottering throne of Stephen was surrounded, before we proceed to notice the further proceedings of Henry and the French King.

The minor events which took place in England, after Henry had left David, King of Scotland, at Carlisle, and had returned to Normandy, we may pass over in silence ; merely stating that almost every act of Stephen was calculated to alienate more and more the affections of his people—or rather that portion of the people which adhered to

his cause ; for it must not be forgotten that besides the partizans of Matilda and her son, there were many of the nobles of the land who boldly dealt with all the affairs of life as if England were in a state of anarchy, and who recognized no authority but their own will.

In this state of things, Stephen, with an infatuation scarcely credible, endeavoured to procure the consent of his lay and clerical adherents to the coronation of his son, Eustace, as his heir and successor. He assembled a parliament of all those who had not abandoned him, and presenting himself with his son, made the proposal which had previously been concerted between himself and Eustace. The Bishops and Clergy, however, unanimously rejected the demand, declaring that the Pope had forbidden the Archbishop to consecrate the son of a King who, against his oath, had usurped the throne, and who, consequently, had no hereditary right to transmit to his children. Even his own turbulent brother, Henry of Winchester, did not raise his voice in favour of Eustace ; and Stephen now saw, apparently for the first time, that he had sought and won the universal hatred of the clergy.

Rage and disappointment drove the King and his son into acts approaching those of madmen. They first caused the Bishops to be confined to the house in which the deliberations had been held, and vowed that they should never go forth till they had yielded to the royal commands. But the clergy maintained their resolution with firmness and dignity ; and after some short confinement, the Archbishop contrived to effect his escape, and fled to France. The rest of the prelates were then liberated, but their estates were immediately seized by the King with impotent rage, which soon subsided, and the temporalities of all were restored, except those of the Primate, which were retained. A sentence of excommunication and interdict however was immediately fulminated by the Pope against the King, in

case of his remaining contumacious, and the Primate was consequently recalled to his see.

As soon as these unhappy disputes were somewhat tranquillized, Stephen turned his efforts against various partizans of Matilda ; but in so doing, he in one or two instances gave offence to members of his own faction, who were allied to the objects of his vengeance. He at length, however, undertook an enterprise aimed more directly at the Empress herself than at any of her supporters. This was the siege of the castle of Wallingsford, which was held out against him by Brian Fitzcomte, a firm and steady friend of Matilda.

Finding that fortress impregnable by any means then known, except famine, Stephen constructed a number of castles round it, by which it would have been completely cut off from all communication with the neighbouring country, had it not possessed a bridge over the Thames, which for a time enabled the garrison to obtain provisions. To deprive them of this resource, Stephen erected a fort at the end of the bridge, which, together with one of the castles, called Craumer's, completed the blockade, and left the garrison utterly without resource.

On finding himself thus shut out from all supplies, Brian Fitzcomte found means to communicate his situation to Henry Plantagenet, then in Normandy, and besought him either to come personally to his aid, or to permit him to surrender the castle, while there was yet a chance of obtaining tolerable terms. Such was the summons which induced Henry so soon to make preparations for quitting his bride and taking the field against Stephen. But the poliey of his enemies was of course, if possible, to detain him in Normandy ; and Eustace, Stephen's son, applied, as we have seen, to his brother-in-law the King of France, representing to him how necessary it was to prevent Henry from passing into England, at least till the castle of Wallingsford

had surrendered. Under these circumstances, Louis immediately prepared to renew the war, returned the hostages which he had received from Henry, and demanded back his own ; thus putting an end to all those expectations of peace which the Duke of Normandy justly entertained.

The situation of Henry was now a very difficult one : he commanded a large and brilliant army, which would have been quite sufficient, as the parties were then situated, to seat him on the throne of England ; but he could not leave his prosperous and attached provinces of France at the mercy of a fickle, savage, and restless Prince. Those subjects who had shown him the greatest attachment, would have had just cause to complain, and abandon his cause, had he done so ; but at the same time it was evident that upon the fall or relief of the castle of Wallingford depended his chance of obtaining the crown of England.

Circumstances had disposed a great party in this country to support his cause as soon as he appeared ; but many dared not avow their attachment to him, until they were assured of assistance and protection. At the same time, while he had morally gained ground in England, he had lost much in extent of territory and military strength, and it was consequently necessary for him to give the moral power of the nation an opportunity of developing itself, so as to recover for him the physical power which had been thrown away. This could only be done by showing his avowed adherents, that he was ready at their call to support and defend them, and by thus encouraging those who were really disposed to support him, but had not yet declared themselves openly, to come forward and give his party that strength and consistence which would render it overpowering.

He had thus a choice of difficulties ; and in endeavouring to meet at once the calls of England and Normandy, he took a step which probably might have lost him both, had

not his own skill, courage and activity, his affable manners, and his wise foresight, supplied in the kingdom the place both of arms and men, while the popularity he had acquired in the duchy, by his liberality, humanity, and resolution, raised up for him a bulwark in the affections of the people against the attacks of France. He determined then upon dividing his power; and, leaving a large body for the defence of Normandy, he set sail for England, in person, with three thousand foot, and one hundred and forty knights.

His passage, though undertaken in the winter season, was rapid and prosperous; but when he arrived, and it was noised abroad how small was the force he had brought with him, the hearts of all his English partisans sunk; and those who were doubtful, held back from a cause which seemed so feebly supported. The fate of Henry trembled in the balance; and had he not displayed at that moment a degree of firmness and decision which was sometimes wanting in after years, his cause most likely would have sunk never to rise again. Very few of the nobles of England joined him, and those who did so, were those only who had ever shown themselves the steadfast friends of his family, and who had nothing further to fear from the enmity of Stephen. Others, it would seem, who had given him the most positive promises of support, now failed to join his standard; and Henry found that the force with which he was to take the field was quite out of proportion with the magnitude of the occasion.

He did not suffer his courage to sink in the least, however, nor his confident demeanour to be changed. He called his friends to council; he spoke to them words of comfort and assurance; he held out to them the prospect of a speedy augmentation of their numbers, and he only demanded of them with what great action he had better commence the campaign. Such conduct renewed hope and expectation. It was determined to besiege Malmesbury, as the first step

to relieving Wallingford, and thither Henry marched at once, receiving but small reinforcements by the way. He was nevertheless successful ; the town was speedily reduced, and the castle, with the exception of one tower, fell into his hands. This sudden and brilliant success, together with his unexpected appearance in England, when Stephen thought he had provided a sufficient diversion to keep him in Normandy, roused the King into activity, while it gave fresh hopes to the partisans of Henry.

Collecting an army in haste, Stephen marched to attack his adversary at Malmesbury ; but Henry was strongly posted between the walls of the town and the river Avon, and remained in his camp till Stephen prepared to cross the river, and risk a battle. The elements, however, fought against the unfortunate usurper. As he approached to the attack, a violent storm of hail and snow dashed directly in the faces of his troops, while a cold and cutting wind benumbed the powers of men who were not accustomed to fight at that season of the year. A retreat was consequently inevitable ; and discomfited and disheartened, Stephen left Henry to pursue his course, and retired to London.

Now, for the first time, a great accession of strength was gained by the Duke of Normandy. The Earl of Leicester, who had long been wavering, joined him ; Warwick castle was given up to him, and thirty other places almost immediately fell into his hands. But Wallingford castle was already reduced to a terrible state of famine, by the forts which Stephen had built round it ; no time was to be lost ; and notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, Henry marched to its relief, passed in arms through the midst of the enemy's forts, threw provisions into Wallingford, and then proceeded to lay siege to the principal castle which Stephen had built in the neighbourhood.

In the meanwhile, the King once more took the field ; and accompanied by his son Eustace, by William of Ipres,

and a large body of Brabançois, by the Earl of Arundel, and by many others of the English nobility, and outnumbering the army of Henry, notwithstanding all the accessions it had received, he marched towards Wallingford, with the firm determination of giving battle to his enemy. Henry, on his part, no sooner heard of the King's advance, than he determined to meet him in the field. Though he knew his own force to be inferior to that of Stephen, he judged well, that a display of valour and enterprise is never lost upon brave men. In order to open the passage across the river, he attacked and took by storm the fort which Stephen had built to command the bridge, and then marched out of his camp to meet his adversary, leaving, as if to mark his confidence in his own powers, a considerable body of his army to carry on the siege of Craumers.

The battle, which seemed inevitable, did not however take place. The Earl of Arundel, it would appear, had already opened a secret communication with the Bishop of Winchester, and with many other nobles and prelates, regarding some means of terminating the civil contest which had so long desolated the land. The Earl himself was perhaps influenced by patriotic motives; but there is every reason to suppose that the Bishop of Winchester, and the persons with whom he was concerned, had no other views than those of so balancing the two contending parties in the kingdom, as to retain the real power in the hands of the Clergy, and to place the greater share in those of Henry of Winchester himself.

In the present instance, however, the Bishop did not appear in the transaction at all; but while Stephen was concerting the plan of the approaching battle with his son and the leaders of the mercenaries, the Earl of Arundel called the principal English noblemen in the camp together, and addressed them, we are told, with great eloquence. The exact words used by the Earl cannot of course be given;

but Lord Lyttleton, from a comparison of various authorities, has composed a speech, which we may regard as substantially, though not actually, Arundel's address to the Barons of Stephen's army ; and offering so masterly a picture of the evils of the times, that I cannot forbear giving a part, notwithstanding the length of the quotation.

“ It is now about sixteen years,” said the Earl, “ that on a doubtful and disputed claim to the crown, the rage of civil war has almost continually infested this kingdom. During this melancholy period, how much blood has been shed ! What devastations and misery have been brought on the people ! The laws have lost their force—the crown its authority ; licentiousness and impurity have shaken all the foundations of public security. This great and noble nation has been delivered a prey to the basest of foreigners, the abominable scum of Flanders, Brabant, and Bretagne, robbers rather than soldiers, restrained by no laws, divine or human ; tied to no country, subject to no prince, instruments of all tyranny, violence, and oppression. At the same time, our cruel neighbours, the Welsh and the Scotch, calling themselves allies or auxiliaries to the Empress, but in reality enemies and destroyers of England, have broken their bounds, ravaged our borders, and taken from us whole provinces, which we never can hope to recover : while, instead of employing our united force against them, we continue thus madly, without any care of our public safety or national honour, to turn our swords against our own bosoms. What benefit have we gained to compensate all these losses, or what do we expect ? When Matilda was mistress of the kinglom, though her power was not yet confirmed, in what manner did she govern ? Did she not make even those of her own faction and court regret the king ? Was not her pride more intolerable still than his levity ; her rapine than his profuseness ? Were any years of his reign so grievous to the people, so offensive to the nobles, as

the first days of hers ? When she was driven out, did Stephen correct his former bad conduct ? Did he dismiss his odious foreign favourite ? Did he discharge his lawless foreign hirelings, who had so long been the scourge and the reproach of England ? Have not they lived ever since upon free quarter, by plundering our houses and our cities ? And now, to complete our miseries, a new army of foreigners, Angevines, Gascons, Poitevins, I know not who, are come over with Henry Plantagenet, the son of Matilda ; and many more no doubt will be called to assist him, as soon as ever his affairs abroad will permit ; by whose help if he be victorious, England must pay the price of the services ; our lands, our honours, must be the hire of these rapacious invaders. But suppose we should have the fortune to conquer for Stephen, what will be the consequence ? Will victory teach him moderation ? Will he learn from security that regard to our liberties which he could not learn from danger ? Alas ! the only fruit of our good success will be this :—the estates of the Earl of Leicester, and others of our countrymen, who have now quitted the party of the King, will be forfeited, and new confiscations will accrue. But let us not hope that, be our victory ever so complete, it will give any lasting peace to this kingdom. Should Henry fall in this battle, there are two other brothers to succeed to his claim, and support his faction ; perhaps with less merit, but certainly with as much ambition as he. What shall we do then to free ourselves from all these misfortunes ? Let us prefer the interest of our country to that of our party, and to all those passions which are apt in civil dissensions to inflame zeal into madness, and to render men the blind instruments of those very evils which they fight to avoid. Let us prevent all the crimes and all the horrors that attend a war of this kind, in which conquest itself is full of calamity, and our most happy victories deserve to be celebrated by tears. Nature herself is

dismayed, and shrinks back from a combat, where every blow that we strike may murder a friend, a relation, a parent.

* * * * *

It is in our power to end the controversy both safely and honourably, by an amicable agreement, not by the sword. Stephen may enjoy the royal dignity for his life, and the succession may be secured to the young Duke of Normandy, with such a present rank in the state as befits the heir of the crown. The bitterest enemies of the King must acknowledge that he is valiant, generous, and good-natured ; his warmest friends cannot deny that he has a great deal of rashness and indiscretion. Both may therefore conclude that he should not be deprived of the royal authority, but that he ought to be restrained from a farther abuse of it ; which can be done by no means so certain and effectual as what I propose ; for thus his power will be tempered by the presence, the counsels, and influence of Prince Henry, who from his own interest in the weal of the kingdom which he is to inherit, will always have a right to interpose his advice, and even his authority, if it be necessary, against any future violation of our liberties, and to procure an effectual redress of our grievances, which we have hitherto sought in vain. If all the English in both armies unite, as I hope that they may, in this plan of pacification, they will be able to give the law to foreigners, and oblige both the King and the Duke to consent to it. This will secure the public tranquillity, and leave no secret stings of resentment to rankle in the hearts of a suffering party, and produce future disturbances. As there will be no triumph, no insolence, no exclusive right to favour on either side, there can be no shame, no anger, no uneasy desire of change. It will be the work of the whole nation, and all must wish to support what all have established. The sons of Stephen, indeed, may endeavour to oppose it ;

but their efforts will be fruitless, and must end very soon in their submission or their ruin. Nor have they any reasonable cause to complain. Their father himself did not come to the crown by hereditary right. He was elected in preference to a woman, and an infant, who were deemed not capable of ruling a kingdom. By that election our allegiance is bound to him during his life ; but neither that bond, nor the reason for which we chose him, will hold as to the choice of a successor. Henry Plantagenet is now grown up to an age of maturity, and every way qualified to succeed to the crown. He is the grandson of a king whose memory is dear to us, and the nearest heir male to him in the course of descent. He appears to resemble him in all his good qualities, and to be worthy to reign over the Normans and English, whose noblest blood united, enriches his veins. Normandy has already submitted to him with pleasure. Why should we now divide that Duchy from England, when it is so greatly the interest of our nobility to keep them always connected ? If we had no other inducement to make us desire a reconciliation between him and Stephen, this would be sufficient. Our estates in both countries will by that means be secured, which otherwise we must forfeit in the one or the other, while Henry remains possessed of Normandy ; and it will not be an easy matter to drive him from thence, even though we should compel him to retire from England. But, by amicably compounding his quarrel with Stephen, we shall maintain all our interests, private and public. His greatness abroad will increase the power of this kingdom ; it will make us respectable and formidable to France. England will be the head of all those ample dominions, which [REDACTED] the British Ocean to the Pyrennean mountains. By governing in his youth so many different states, he will learn to govern us, and come to the crown after the decease of King Stephen, accomplished in all the arts of good policy.

His mother has willingly resigned to him her pretensions ; or rather, she acknowledges that his are superior. We therefore can have nothing to apprehend on that side. In every view, our peace, our safety, the repose of our consciences, the quiet and happiness of our posterity, will be firmly established by the means I propose. Let Stephen continue to wear the crown that we gave him as long as he lives ; but after his death, let it descend to that prince who alone can put an end to our unhappy divisions. If you approve my advice, and will empower me to treat in your names, I will immediately convey your desires to the King and the Duke."

Whether such was the substance of the Earl's speech or not, the effect of what he did say was to win over to his opinion all the Barons present, apparently without exception. The arguments he had used were repeated to the soldiery, and the truth of his statements, the influence of the leaders, and probably the instigation of secret agents employed by the Earl and his friends, had as great an effect in their ranks as amongst the nobles ; so that ere the King had concluded his consultation with William of Ipres, there was a general outcry in the army for peace on the terms proposed by the Earl of Arundel. The Earl himself communicated what may be termed *the decision* of the nobles to the King. Eustace, and William of Ipres assembled in council, and the effect upon each was such as might be expected from their various characters. Stephen was overwhelmed, and thunderstruck. William of Ipres, not less surprised, was enabled by cunning to restrain his rage and vexation, well knowing that his mercenaries were fewer than the English in Stephen's army, and very far inferior in numbers to the two armies, should they join together, which was not at all unlikely to be the case, if the Earl's proposal were rejected by the King. Eustace was all fire and indignation to see himself thus by a word stripped of

all hope of that crown which he looked upon as his hereditary right.

Stephen, however, was obliged to yield, where he had no power to resist ; and the Earl of Arundel proceeded to offer the same terms to Henry, having prepared the way by secret intrigues with the English leaders in that Prince's army. Henry was as unwilling as Stephen, and as confident of success if the contest were left to the decision of arms ; but he also was obliged to submit, and a conference took place between him and Stephen, with the infant stream of the Thames between them. The two princes were without attendants, so that no one can tell what passed during this interview ; but the result was a short suspension of hostilities, for the purpose of negotiating a peace on the basis proposed.

Eustace, however, on his part, declared that he would consent to no treaty so injurious to his interests, retired to Cambridge, gathered together a small army, and supported by the Earl of Northampton and some others, waged war upon his own account. Henry kept the truce with good faith ; but one of the conditions most advantageous to him he took care to see executed. This stipulation was, that Stephen himself should destroy the castle of Craumers, which was accordingly done. The formal treaty of peace however was still unconcluded when the suspension of arms terminated ; and the war was resumed on both parts, though with much greater advantage to Henry than to his adversary.

The young Duke of Normandy had soon an opportunity of showing himself superior to his adversary, not only in military skill, but also in moderation and justice. The Governor of Oxford and a large body of Stephen's soldiery, having made an incursion into the territories possessed by Henry, that prince put himself at the head of the troops he could most speedily collect, met the enemy, attacked and routed them, taking prisoners no less than twenty knights. The rest of the routed force was pursued to the gates of

Oxford by his cavalry, under inferior officers, who then proceeded to retaliate upon Stephen, by pillaging the country far and wide. On their return, however, they were not a little surprised to find that Henry commanded every thing which had been taken as booty, to be restored as far as possible, and he added words which rapidly spread from mouth to mouth : “ It is not to plunder the people, that I came into England,” he said ; “ but to deliver them from the exactions of the great.”

Nottingham and Stamford fell into Henry’s hands very shortly after the recommencement of hostilities, the former being taken by storm, the latter costing only the siege of a few days ; and though Stephen in return captured Ipswich castle from the Duke of Norfolk, yet the balance of success was much in favour of Henry.

In the midst of these events, Eustace, the chief obstacle to the conclusion of a peace on the terms proposed by the Earl of Arundel, was removed by death from the troubrous scene into which his violent, impetuous, and daring spirit must inevitably have brought new elements of confusion, had he lived. Although those were ages of suspicion, and although poison was as common as the dagger, or the sword, in removing an obstinate enemy, I have never found the death of Eustace ascribed to any unfair means. He had commanded his men, on some occasion of offence, to pillage the lands of the Abbey of Saint Edmond’s-bury, and even to cut down the ripe corn belonging to the monks. He remained under the heat of the summer sun, it would seem, to see these orders performed, and was immediately seized with a calenture, attended with violent frenzy, which ended his life in a few days. A similar fate attended his friend the Earl of Northampton, to whose instigation many of his evil actions are attributed.

The death of another great nobleman, distinguished by more than ordinary rapacity and baseness, is recorded about

the same time. This was the Earl of Chester, who was poisoned by one of his own vassals, and whose death was in some degree a relief to both parties, from each of which he had endeavoured to extort advantages in the most unworthy manner.

Stephen's spirits sunk upon the death of Eustace. His other son, William, was in no degree fitted to fill the throne of England, or to contest the crown with Henry Plantagenet. The King was aware that such was the case, as well as the Prince himself; and all obstacles being removed from the scheme proposed by the Earl of Arundel, the Bishop of Winchester and the Archbishop of Canterbury took it up with much eagerness, supported by the great majority of the Barons of the kingdom. It is supposed that they thus acted with a view of neutralizing the power of Henry by the power of Stephen, and the power of Stephen by that of Henry: whereas had either of those two princes totally overcome his rival by force of arms, the authority so gained would have been sufficient to afford the means of punishing past offences, of resuming grants unjustly made, of revoking dangerous privileges, and doing away unreasonable immunities. Such power, men who had lived a corrupt life, and were filled with evil desires, were not likely to see placed, without reluctance, in the hands of any one; and they laboured therefore effectually to bring about an agreement between Henry and Stephen. A parliament was summoned to meet at Winchester, in the end of November, 1153, by writs from both princes, and there a treaty was drawn up upon terms previously arranged. But as this council was scantily attended by the lay Barons of the empire, another parliament was called to meet Stephen and Henry at Oxford, and by it the convention agreed upon was confirmed and ratified.

By the agreement now entered into, Henry was adopted by Stephen as his son and successor, *and his heir by here-*

ditary right. The words are extraordinary, but it is clearly proved by the whole context of the document, that Stephen merely intended to imply that the kingdom was to descend to Henry's heirs by hereditary right. For this concession on the part of the King, Henry did homage, and swore fealty to Stephen, and at the same time granted and confirmed to William, Stephen's surviving legitimate son, all the possessions which his father had enjoyed in England or France before his usurpation of the throne, and also all that William himself possessed in right of his wife, or which had been given to him by Stephen ; adding to all this, several other estates of considerable value, amongst which was the honor of Pevensey.

Thus this most singular document proceeds with the most extraordinary anomalies. Henry, who appears to have been contending for the kingdom, from his birth, as his own hereditary property, now claims all rights to it by the gift of Stephen. It is upon that concession, and upon Stephen's adoption, that he builds his claim ; and yet he himself confers upon William, Stephen's son, all the territories and estates which he is to possess, while Stephen's son agrees to hold them of the Duke of Normandy, and does homage to him for the very lands in England which had been given him by his father. In his homage, however, there is a saving clause to the purport that he shall be free from feudal service to the Duke, if Henry fail in his engagements to the King ; and the same is observable in regard to the oaths of the nobles to Henry, and to Stephen : the first receiving the homage of his former adversaries, with a saving of their allegiance to Stephen, and also with the intimation that the homage was only so long binding, as he should keep his engagements with the King. To Stephen, the Barons of Henry's party did homage, and swore allegiance, upon condition that he kept his engagements with the Duke ; and the Clergy, shielded under the happy plea of neutrality,

held out to both parties the menace of ecclesiastical censures in case of any infraction of the treaty ; implying thereby the much more important threat, of employing their temporal and spiritual influence against the defaulter. This they were not only likely, but certain to do, as by the convention they assured to themselves the confirmation of all grants and restitutions which had been made by the King to the Church. This was in fact putting the great seal upon the treaty. But Henry took care to stipulate for some advantage to himself, beside the remote prospect of the crown after Stephen's death. He required and received proper security that the forts and castles of the kingdom should be given up to him, on the decease of the King, and that Stephen should act in all affairs of the kingdom, except the mere administration of justice, by his advice.

Henry was now King of England, in almost everything but name ; and other secret articles it would seem were added to the treaty, though not published in Stephen's declaration, which increased the power of the young Duke. We cannot very well trust to the historians of that time for the wording of each article ; but two of them which were speedily afterwards published under the authority of the great council, provided that all castles built in the reign of King Stephen should be immediately demolished, and that all foreign troops should be sent out of the kingdom.

The evils committed by the mercenaries, I have already spoken of. The evils of the castles which had been built were certainly not less, for they had almost universally become dens of petty tyrants, within the walls of which every sort of horror and abomination was perpetrated. Thus, these additional articles of the treaty were amongst the most popular that it contained ; and it was moreover known, that these two articles had been insisted on by Henry. Stephen, however, though weaker than his rival, in every respect, though unable to resist him in the field,

or to contend with him in the cabinet, had once again the folly to select the most unpopular act that he could commit, as his point of resistance against his competitor. He was easily prevailed upon, to perform neither his dangerous task of demolishing the castles, nor to take the unpleasant step of dismissing the mercenaries. Henry remonstrated, but in vain. He exposed to the parliament of Dunstable, the infraction of the treaty which had been committed by Stephen, and though that monarch scarcely thought fit to cover his evasion with a decent veil, the Duke of Normandy chose rather to submit than plunge into a new war: satisfied with having gained the great advantage of displaying himself as the champion of the popular cause, against two of the greatest nuisances of the times.

Other causes perhaps might combine with wise moderation to prevent him from resenting the conduct of Stephen. He was now anxious to return to Normandy, which province, as he had expected, had been assailed by Louis during his absence from his continental dominions. The French monarch, however, had not shown any great activity, or reaped any very remarkable success. The town and castle of Vernon taken, and the destruction of a part of the town of Verneuil, comprised all the feats he had performed, if we except the fact of his having excited some of the Nobles of Aquitaine to revolt against their new sovereign.

No sooner did Henry arrive in Normandy, than he hastened to quell the insurrection excited by Louis in Aquitaine, nor did he find any difficulty in accomplishing that object. He showed himself lenient and moderate to the rebels; and with the same wise policy, on his return to Normandy, he sought not to take vengeance upon Louis, but obtained from him by negociation, a restitution of all which had been captured, on the payment of a trifling sum. He left no means untried, indeed, to gain the good-will of

the French King, and found it not difficult to do so, though the favour of one so weak and unstable was too uncertain a possession to be a very valuable acquisition.

Henry had now been married two years and a half, and Eleanor had already given an heir to his dominions. She was again pregnant, when messengers from England announced to Henry the unexpected death of Stephen. The young Sovereign, however, as if to show his confidence in his own power, refused to rise from before the castle of a revolting Baron, which he was then besieging, even to put on the crown of England. But as soon as he had reduced his vassal to obedience, Henry hastened to Rouen, where he conferred with his mother, the Empress Matilda, who now agreed to remain in Normandy ; and though she made no formal renunciation of her title to the crown, she left her son to base his claim both upon her own rights and upon the treaty of Winchester. This being settled, Henry and Eleanor proceeded to Barfleur, in order to embark for England ; but the weather was tempestuous, the wind contrary, the knowledge of seamen in those days but small, and Henry and his wife were detained upon the coast of Normandy an entire month before they could pursue their voyage.

The state of England, during this delay, furnishes a valuable indication of the progress made by society, even amidst the horrible anarchy and confusion of Stephen's reign. No preceding King, since the Norman Conquest, had died without the most terrible excesses and outrages taking place ere his successor could ascend the throne and grasp the sceptre firmly ; but between the death of Stephen and the arrival of Henry, everything remained tranquil and orderly ; and we may well believe that, as evil often produces good, the turbulence, the bloodshed, the rapine, and the anarchy, which had disgraced the land for so many years, tended to make men appreciate law and justice, see

the sad consequences of faithlessness and treachery, and perceive the beauty of faith, harmony, and social order.

Henry and Eleanor, with a brilliant train, landed on the coast of Hampshire, in the beginning of December, after a tempestuous voyage, in which their fleet was dispersed, and their own vessel very nearly wrecked. The monarch's reception in England, however, was quite sufficient to obliterate all recollections of the discomforts of the sea. At Winchester, to which he immediately turned his steps, the nobles and prelates of the land gathered round him from every part of the kingdom. All men felt that they were delivered from an intolerable yoke : all but those who had plunged deeply into the rapine and corruptions of the times, rejoiced at the prospect of restored tranquillity ; and all, either sincerely or hypocritically, hailed Henry as a benefactor and deliverer. His journey from Winchester to London was a continual triumph, of the most glorious, because of the most bloodless kind. The citizens of the capital received him with joy and acclamations ; and on the nineteenth of December, 1154, Henry and Eleanor were crowned in the Abbey of Westminster, without any condition being presented to the monarch, or any terms being wrung from him, but simply upon his taking the oath usually administered to the ancient Kings of England.

Thus was raised to the throne of this country, Henry the Second, not only the first of the Plantagenet line of our kings, but the first who really looked upon himself as King of the English people, since the overthrow of Harold. He had many advantages on ascending the throne : he was a direct descendant both of the Saxon and Norman kings of England, but he was neither a Norman nor a Saxon, and was without the peculiar prejudice of either. William the First, with the exception of a short period at the commencement of his reign, governed England as a foreign conqueror, and we can only regard as his people those Nor-

man nobles whose swords upheld him. William Rufus was even more distinguished than any of his race as a Norman tyrant ; and Henry the First, though a wise and politic prince, and far superior to his predecessor, still treated England as a tributary country, to be drained of its treasures, and to contribute its forces of all kinds to augment the possessions of his family on the continent. He was still merely King of the Normans in England, like all his predecessors ; and as I have before said, the race of the English Kings may be looked upon as commencing with Henry the Second ; for the turbulent reign of Stephen can hardly be considered as affording any means of judging in what way his affections might have turned, had he been left free to act the monarch of a united land. As it was, he seldom if ever reigned over more than one half of the country at once ; and where he did reign, he was a king of foreign mercenaries, and not of the English nation.

I have now given a brief and very imperfect view of the state of this country, just before the birth of Richard the First, and of the events which through a long series of changing fortunes, placed the family of Plantagenet upon the throne of England. I must next proceed to speak of what followed immediately after the birth of that monarch, though of course his own individual acts can form no part of the tale during those years of infancy, in the course of which the lives of few men afford little matter of interest, and respecting which authentic records are in almost all cases extremely scanty. It may be well, therefore, to continue this sketch of the general history of the country, and of the provinces then joined with it under one sceptre, till such time as Richard began to take an active part in the affairs of life, when it will be time to relate all that we know of his younger days.

We have seen that Eleanor had borne her husband one son in France, who was named William ; and shortly after

his accession to the throne, the Queen, who was pregnant at the time of their tempestuous voyage to England, was delivered in the city of London of a second son, named Henry, in March, 1155. Amongst the first proceedings of Henry the Second, was to settle the succession of the crown upon these two sons ; and the lay and spiritual Barons assembled in Parliament at Wallingford, took the oath of fealty accordingly. Not the slightest difficulty was made on the part of the Barons to the performance of this act ; for Henry, since his accession, had fully maintained his popularity, even while he had taken measures for correcting abuses and remedying evils, which struck many a severe blow at those who had unjustly profited by the disturbances of the last reign.

The most popular of these measures he began with first ; namely, the dismissal of all the mercenaries ; which was carried through with the consent and approbation of Parliament as then constituted. There were great murmurs, and apparently some indecent threatenings on the part of the foreign troops ; but the King's order for them to quit the country was obeyed without resistance, though to the leaders Stephen had granted immense possessions, especially to William of Ipres, whom he had created Earl of Kent. All these grants were now resumed ; and stripped of every thing but their moveable wealth, which their dissolute habits probably rendered comparatively small, the mercenary captains quitted a country which they had desolated, and more than one retired in despair to a monastery.

The demolition of the fortresses which had been left by Stephen, remained to be accomplished, and this was also done without any serious difficulty or resistance : but a more dangerous task was next undertaken by Henry, which was, the resumption of those crown lands which had been alienated both by Stephen and Matilda. It was held to be a fundamental principle of the monarchy, that all the ancient

demesne lands of the crown were inalienable, and consequently all these grants were contrary to law. No length of possession could render them valid, and the maintenance of the royal dignity required a revenue which could not be supplied without them. But still Henry had to consider that there was scarcely a great Baron in the empire who would not be more or less damaged by their resumption, and he might very well expect opposition, from first to last, in the council and in the field.

He was prompted to undertake the resumption, however, not only by the duty of vindicating the law, but by the necessities of the crown, and by his own disposition, which was of a grasping nature ; and upon the whole, the resistance that he met with was very much less than might have been expected. His first step in the proceeding was to lay the matter before the great council of the nation ; and although in this council sat a great many persons who were to suffer from the measure he proposed, yet he succeeded in obtaining the consent of that assembly. In conducting this proceeding, however, Henry showed a much greater acquaintance with human nature, and the springs which moved the politics of that day, than Stephen ever displayed. In resuming the grants he proposed to make an exception in favour of the clergy. The superstitious devotion of the times prevented the lay Barons from murmuring at this as an act of unlawful partiality, and the Clergy were all eager and desirous that a proceeding should take place, marked by an exception in their favour, which confirmed in the strongest manner a principle that they had always maintained in their dealings with other men—namely, that no grant to the church could ever be resumed.

This probably may be the secret of the ready assent which Henry's proposition met with ; and no sooner was that assent obtained, than he proceeded to put the proposed

measure into execution, showing therein a vigour and promptitude which increased his power and authority, and a moderation and clemency which maintained his popularity undiminished. The first that attempted to oppose him was the Earl of Albemarle, who during the reign of Stephen had ruled Yorkshire with almost sovereign sway. It would seem that he did not absolutely refuse to surrender the grants now resumed, but that he certainly hesitated to express his acquiescence, and was making preparation for actual resistance.

Henry, however, marched at once in person to settle the question, ere open rebellion broke out, and the Earl found himself compelled to obey, and make entire restitution of all the crown lands. Almost at the same time, Roger Mortimer and the young Earl of Hereford took arms on the frontiers of Wales, and refused to resign what they had received for good and meritorious services. The case of the Earl of Hereford, indeed, seems peculiarly hard, for those lands which were now demanded, had been granted by Matilda to his father Milo Fitzwalter, one of the noblest, most disinterested, resolute, and unchangeable of all her friends. But Henry founded the resumption upon the general illegality of all such grants; and there were many others similarly situated with the young Earl of Hereford. He could therefore make no distinction in resuming the demesne, but he might have granted the lands afterwards to the Earl in the nature of a benefice, to be held for his life, which would have been consonant to law and justice, and honourable to the King's gratitude, and good feeling. Mortimer, however, and his ally, waited Henry's coming in arms; but the Earl was detached from the conspiracy by the exhortations of the Bishop of Winchester, who persuaded him to resign the two castles in dispute, and submit to the King's pleasure.

Mortimer, thus left alone, nevertheless determined to

hold out, and defended the three castles of Clebury, Wigmore, and Bridgenorth, against the forces of the King. All three were speedily captured ; but the career of Henry had very nearly terminated before the castle of Bridgenorth, into which Mortimer had thrown himself, and against which the King commanded in person. While he was directing the operations within a very short distance of the walls of the castle, an arrow was aimed at Henry with unerring skill ; and, had not one of his most gallant officers, Hubert Saint Clare, cast himself between the King and the missile, it must have pierced the monarch's heart. Saint Clare received it, however, in his own bosom, and died shortly after in the arms of his grateful sovereign ; recommending his only child, a daughter, to the care of him for whose life he had given his own. To the honour of Henry be it said that he nobly fulfilled the trust. Bridgenorth soon after surrendered at discretion ; and to the surprise of all, Henry pardoned Mortimer freely the resistance he had made, contented himself with resuming the grants, the restitution of which he had at first demanded, and took no other vengeance of his revolted subject.

It need hardly be pointed out what a remarkable influence such acts of clemency and moderation must have had in humanizing the hearts of men, and softening the asperities of a barbarous age. No other resistance, that I have discovered, was made to the resumption of the grants ; and Henry proceeded in the same course of policy, temperance, firmness, and mildness, pardoning offences against himself, and even against his crown, with perhaps excessive moderation ; trusting to the vigour and sternness with which he punished offences against social rights and the general security, to maintain that respect for his authority, which could alone enable him to be lenient without danger. In a very rapid manner, considering the long period of anarchy which had just passed, law and order, and the even admin-

istration of justice were re-established ; and to this happy effect, the King's frequent presence in different parts of the country, seeing with his own eyes, and hearing with his own ears, greatly contributed.

Another act of much importance took place in this most bright and honourable period of the King's reign, which was the renewal or confirmation of the famous charter of Henry I.

Everything now promised Henry, in England at least, internal peace ; but there remained much still to be done : he had to guard against attack from without, to suppress civil wars in his continental possessions, and to risk a struggle upon his northern frontier for the recovery of those English provinces which David, King of Scotland, had contrived to seize upon, during the late contest for the throne. No moment could be more favourable for the attempt to regain these provinces, than that which Henry chose, while Malcolm, King of Scotland, who had now succeeded to David his grandfather, was yet under seventeen years of age.

There was but one impediment in the way of the English monarch : namely, the oath which he had taken while at the court of King David at Carlisle, never to resume those counties, if he should obtain the crown of England. Henry, however, was not a great respecter of oaths, and in this case he did not treat that which he had taken at all tenderly. He held, and probably with justice, that in this instance, it was in no degree binding, for it had been extracted from him at a time when he was completely in the power of the King of Scotland—when that monarch had promised to make great efforts in his favour, which were never accomplished—and when he had every reason to suppose that the attainment of the crown of England, which was contemplated in the oath, was likely to ensue as a consequence of David's assistance. The corresponding engagements of the King of Scotland, had not been fulfilled.

Henry had derived no equivalent advantage whatsoever, and, consequently, he might well regard his oath as of no avail. He accordingly sent ambassadors to the Court of Scotland, to represent that it was not right or just, that this large portion of England should remain dismembered from the empire. The King of Scotland did not resist ; but, by the advice of his council, restored to Henry, Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Northumberland, and agreed to do homage for the county of Lothian, which had been conferred by Edgar, one of our Saxon monarchs, upon Kenneth III.

I have dwelt more particularly upon the circumstances which induced Henry to pay no attention to his oath in regard to Scotland, because another event took place in the commencement of his reign, in which a solemn engagement was directly violated on political motives, no less strong than those which actuated him in the transaction with Scotland, but without any moral justification. In order to make the proceeding to which I allude clearly understood, it may be necessary to go back to the period of Geoffrey, Count of Anjou, Henry's father. By the will of that prince, as we have seen, he left the three provinces of Maine, Anjou, and Touraine to his eldest son : but, by an extraordinary disposition made by him on his death-bed, he forbade his own body to be buried, till Henry should take an oath positively to perform every part of the will, before he knew the contents thereof. The dying prince induced the nobles who were about him to swear that they would not permit the funeral to take place till such time as the oath had been duly administered to his son. Henry, however, very naturally objected to promise such blind obedience to injunctions of whose nature he was ignorant ; but at length, after having held out for some time—sooner than see his father's body remain unburied—he consented, and took the oath.

As soon as the will was opened, he found that the Count

of Anjou had only left him the important territories named, on condition that he should give them up to his brother Geoffrey, in case the hereditary dominions of his mother, Matilda, should ever be fully recovered by him.

This clause of the Count's will, and the oath Henry had taken, were well known at the time of his accession to the crown of England; but with the condition of the will—which he was now called upon to perform—he was not in any degree inclined to comply. In short, though fixed upon the English throne, and in full possession of Normandy, Henry resolved to defeat the will of his father, and to violate the vow which he had taken to maintain it. Whether or not, if he had refused to take the oath at the time, the feudal law,—as effected by the customs of Anjou, Touraine, and Maine,—would have put him in possession of those provinces by right of primogeniture, can hardly be told; but, at all events, on the condition of that oath, he had received very great benefits. He had obtained investiture of the three provinces in a tranquil and easy manner, whereas, in other circumstances, he would have had to fight every foot of the ground, and, very likely, would have lost possession of the country altogether; and he also derived considerable advantages in point of reputation and character, by taking that oath, which he would have lost altogether, had his father's body been suffered to remain unburied in consequence of his refusing to bind himself to perform the will. Having gained all the superiority which was to be obtained by taking the oath, however, and benefitted to the utmost by the favourable terms of the will, he now refused to perform the less agreeable clause, and applied to the Pope to be set free from the engagement into which he had entered.

The Pope thought it reasonable to grant the request of so powerful a prince. The King of France had received Henry's homage for the whole of the provinces now in question, and did not think fit to oppose him; and Geoffrey

Plantagenet was left to break out into ill-considered revolt, which was soon crushed by the superior skill and power of his brother. Henry contented himself with demolishing the fortresses possessed by Geoffrey, giving him an annual sum of money instead, and leaving him in possession of his other estates—an act of clemency the more extraordinary, as Geoffrey had committed the rarely pardoned offence of being in the right.

About the same period, some disturbances took place in the province of Aquitaine, which have very generally been connected by historians with the revolt of Geoffrey. I do not, however, find any proof that such was the case. Any symptoms of insurrection which Henry might perceive in the territories he had received, were soon put a stop to, and he remained in peaceable possession of all his continental dominions, notwithstanding the just claims of his brother, and the favourable opportunities which those claims afforded to the King of France to promote a division in the territories of a vassal far too powerful.

Henry, however, though now fixed firmly in possession of England—comprising the counties which Stephen had suffered to be dismembered by the King of Scotland, and though established peaceably in provinces embracing one-third of France, meditated new augmentation of territory, in the conquest of Ireland, and the subjection of Wales. Nor would he probably have bounded his ambitious efforts there, had not a weakness of his own character raised up that internal foe, who first sapped the foundation of his greatness, and gave opportunities for refractory subjects and foreign enemies to trouble his peace at home and to assail him from without.

It does not come within the scope of this introduction to notice more particularly the King's expedition against Wales, than merely to give an outline of the causes which produced it, and the general results. The hardy, resolute,

and active character of the Welsh people found a fair field for action during the troubled reign of Stephen ; and continual ravages on the English border marked how dangerous they were as neighbours. Henry had passed a considerable period of his early life within the districts subject to their incursions ; and his knowledge of their habits would have been sufficient cause for so vigilant and active a monarch as Henry to undertake the subjection of the turbulent people who had such good reason to be the persevering enemies of the Anglo-Norman race.

The Welsh, it would appear, did not fully comprehend the character of the monarch who now ruled the English nation, and thought they might pursue the same depredations as in former years, so that Henry was in some degree compelled to take measures for their repression. His first steps were such as might be expected from his prudence ; and he employed means to strengthen a colony of Flemings, which had been early planted in South Wales, and had proved, on many occasions, a strong bulwark to the English frontier. The importance of the occasion, however, rendered it necessary to use much more vigorous measures ; and, as soon as possible after his accession, he undertook boldly the conquest of the whole country. That this attempt was dangerous and difficult Henry must have known, both from the opposition and reverses which attended the arms of his grandfather Henry I., and from the frequent defeats which some of the bravest and most skilful of the Norman nobles had undergone not long before his accession. Notwithstanding these defeats, the most signal of which was that of the Earl of Chester and Madoc, Prince of Powys land, by the famous Owen Gwyneth, much ground had been gained in South Wales by the English and Flemings. Henry, therefore, determined to turn his arms directly against Owen Gwyneth, prompted, it is supposed, by Cadwallader, one of the Welsh princes. The latter had

been driven out of his territories by Owen, King of North Wales, who, there is every reason to believe, had never yet either done homage to the English crown, or owned any allegiance to the King of this country.

The army which Henry now assembled was large, well appointed, and brilliant; but in the very outset he suffered himself rashly to be drawn into an ambuscade in the mountains, where he was attacked by the Welsh, and lost a very great number of his men; he himself being forced to retreat, and narrowly escaping with his life. He contrived, however, to rally his men, and to retrieve in some degree the disasters of the day, which ever after proved a warning to the English King. He now laid out a plan of operations totally different, and, avoiding the mountains, took his way by the sea coast, his fleet following him, and insuring to him support in case of need. In vain Owen Gwyneth endeavoured to lead him into fresh ambuscades, or, encamping on the side of Snowden, like an eagle perched upon the rock, watched the progress of the enemy for the purpose of attacking him unprepared. Henry was neither to be again deceived, nor turned from his purpose; and, confining his operations to the more open country, he subdued a great part of it, making roads, and building and repairing castles to render any future proceedings against the Welsh more easy and effectual.

The progress made by the English King could not escape the eyes of Owen Gwyneth; and, finding he had no power sufficient to resist the united forces of England, that Prince proposed to open negotiations for peace, which Henry only granted on the condition of his doing homage, restoring all the lands which had been conquered during the reign of Stephen, and reinstating Cadwallader in his territories. Two of the Welsh monarch's sons were given as hostages, and Henry returned to England, leaving his principal officers to carry on the war against the inferior Princes of

Wales, who, one by one, were brought to submission, and did homage for their lands.

The last that submitted was the famous Rees ap Gryffyth, who was welcomed and honourably treated by Henry, the attention of that Sovereign being now called to another quarter.

Such was the result of the English monarch's first expedition into Wales. The conquest of Ireland—which would appear to have been one of the great objects of Henry's ambition—we shall have to notice casually hereafter, and therefore I will not dwell upon it now; more especially as it does not in any important degree affect the history which is to follow.

Various abuses still existed in England, which it was necessary for Henry to sweep away; and a part of the year 1157 and the commencement of the year 1158 were spent by that monarch in going from one part of the country to another, endeavouring as far as possible to remove the last remnants of all those evils which had been engendered by the civil wars. One of the most important transactions of those two years was the calling in of the old coinage, which had suffered, during the reign of Stephen, the most terrible debasement, and the reissuing it restored to the proper weight and standard. Another very important transaction that occurred in the year 1157 was the admission of Malcolm, King of Scotland, to do homage to the English Sovereign, which act took place at Chester, whether that monarch came to perform it, according to the promise he had given immediately after Henry's accession to the throne. This homage was rendered generally for all the fiefs which he held of the crown of England, but was guarded by a clause saving the royal dignity of the young Scottish king.

These peaceful occupations, however, appeared likely to suffer an interruption from some transactions which took

place on the continent. The Duchy of Brittany was at that period, in point of feudal institutions, somewhat behind the rest of France, and it had also been for some time filled with confusion and civil contention, in consequence of the dying act of Conan the Fat, Duke of Britanny, by which he disowned Hoel, his reputed son, declaring positively and distinctly, that he was not, and could not, be his child. The Duchy was immediately divided into two factions. Eudes or Eudo, Viscount of Porhoet,*—having married the eldest daughter of Conan, widow of Alain le Noir, Count of Richmond—laid claim to the succession, and was recognised by the people of Rennes, and by a great part of upper and lower Britanny; but the important towns of Nantes and Quimper, with various territories attached to them, maintained the party of Hoel, and a civil war of an anarchical, but not very desolating character, took place. Little is known of these wars: but it seems that the greater part of Britanny never recognised Hoel; calling him merely Count of Nantes, but never denying his right to that part of the territory.

In the meantime a new claimant to the often contested Duchy of Britanny started up in the person of Conan, son of Bertha, Countess of Porhoet, by her first husband, Alain le Noir. If Hoel was illegitimate, the young Conan's right cannot be doubted as the representative of his mother, but she herself gave countenance to Hoel's claims by siding with him so far as the County of Nantes was concerned, and receiving from her brother, in 1153, a donation for her son Conan of the town of Villeneuve.† It is worthy of

* This name is confounded by Lord Lyttleton, with that of Pontieure, or Penthievre. Eudes, however, was of a distinct Breton race, and was son of Geoffrey, Viscount of Josselin.

† Lord Lyttleton imagines that Conan the Less did not assert his title till after his mother's death, and that she died during the struggle between her husband and Hoel. Such, however, is not at all the case.

remark also, that, in the act of donation, she suffers Hoel to style himself Duke of Britanny, and, at the same time, or shortly afterwards, her husband Eudes styles himself likewise Duke, and, with the consent and approbation of his son by Bertha, named Geoffrey, performs acts of sovereignty in the Duchy.

Thus, at the time of Henry's expedition into Wales, there were three candidates for the ducal coronet of Britanny. Conán the Less, however, who had been in England, it would appear, during the last year of Stephen's reign, had returned in 1156, supported by a large party in the duchy, and took arms at once against his stepfather. His first attempt was upon the town of Rennes, which he besieged and took; and, shortly after, Eudes himself was captured by a partisan of Conán, from which time the Duchy was generally recognised as his. Nantes and its territory still remained in possession of Hoel, and against the people of that city Conán next prepared to turn his arms.

The inhabitants of Nantes, however, having, in the course of Hoel's government, discovered his incapacity, expelled him with very little ceremony, and called to their aid Geoffrey Plantagenet, brother of Henry the Second of England, offering him the title of Count. Geoffrey, stripped by his brother of his inheritance, gladly availed himself of the opportunity of aggrandizement; and Henry willingly saw his brother placed in this honourable situation; which, beside other advantages to be derived from the establishment of a Prince of the house of Plantagenet in part of Britanny, offered such occupation to a gallant and enterprising spirit as might prevent the Count of Nantes, embarrassed as he was likely to be in a war with Conán, from disturbing Henry in the possession of Anjou and Maine.

Bertha did not die till the year 1162, and she is mentioned in the Charters of the Abbey of Redon, and other places, up to that period, as still living, and confirming the acts of her son.

He therefore consented readily to his brother's acceptance of the coronet, left him in the enjoyment of his pension, and, we are told, held out to him a promise of support in case he should be attacked. The knowledge that his rival would be thus powerfully assisted, probably withheld Conan from any vigorous efforts against the Count of Nantes ; but still Henry kept a watchful eye upon the province during the years 1157 and the beginning of 1158, while he himself was engaged in the struggle with the Welsh, in all probability looking forward to the future for a union of that Duchy with the other immense continental possessions of the Crown of England. In the year 1158, however, he received intelligence of the decease of his brother, which took place in the month of July ; and about the same time came the news that Conan had made himself master of the town of Nantes, immediately after Geoffrey's death.

What right or title Henry had to claim that city as a part of the succession of his brother, has never very clearly appeared. Lord Lyttleton supposes that some testamentary gift of the County was made by Geoffrey to his brother Henry, with the consent and authorization of the people of Nantes : but I can discover by no means any proof that such was the case. It seems to me probable that the King himself manufactured the claim, rather than that he possessed it by any right ; for the history of his whole life shows frequent instances of the same grasping at every advantage. He now, however, proceeded to take measures for obtaining Nantes, and at the same time he carried on a negociation with the King of France, having for its object the recovery of the Norman Vexin, which had been ceded to the French crown by his father Geoffrey.

With these views, he went over to Normandy as soon after the death of his brother as the state of England would permit, and held a conference with the French King upon the frontiers of the Duchy, in regard to a marriage between

his son named Henry—who now, in consequence of his elder brother's death, was heir apparent to the crown of England, and Margaret, daughter of Louis, the French King, by Constance of Castile, whom that monarch had married after his divorce from Eleanor. The dower demanded with the Princess was the Norman Vexin ; and, as Constance and her husband had no male issue, they were extremely glad to grant the territories required, in order to secure for their daughter a seat upon the throne of England. The youth of the two principal parties, however, left much to futurity ; for the Prince was but seven years old, and the Princess but three. Henry, however, skilfully turned the apparent obstacle to his own advantage ; and, sending his famous minister Becket to the court of France, he exacted and obtained the following extraordinary conditions : that the Princess should be confided to his care, and sent into Normandy to be educated as a wife for his son ; and that the castles of the Norman Vexin should be placed in the custody of three Knights Templars, to be held by them till such time as the marriage could be consummated, when they were to be given up to England. He thus stipulated, in fact, that he should hold the daughter of the French King as a hostage, and secured the neutrality of three important castles upon his Norman frontier.

All this, however, was not sufficient. Becket having completely won the favour of the King of France, Henry was invited to Paris in order to receive the Princess from the hands of her parents, and to conduct her into Normandy. At the French court the monarch aided by his minister proceeded so artfully, as to obtain permission from the King of France to march into Britanny, and in the quality of Grand Seneschal of France, which he held as Count of Anjou, to decide between the young Duke Conan and his old rival Eudes, who had escaped from prison some time

before, had served the King of France, and whose claim to the Duchy of Britanny was now resumed.

Monstrous as was the weakness of Louis in a political point of view, it was scarcely less so in a moral light, if we consider that the person into whose hands he gave the judgment of so important a dispute, was himself a claimant of part of the territory in question. He was, moreover, an interested party in consequence of an old claim—apparently a just one—of the Dukes of Normandy to hold Britanny as a fief. Notwithstanding Henry's quality of Grand Seneschal, the natural resort of the claimants to Britanny was to the King's court of Peers so long as the claims of the Norman Dukes were not allowed ; and thither, had Louis been politic or just, he would have brought the cause for decision. Such, however, was not the plan which he pursued ; and the determination of the whole was left to Henry, who had previously issued a summons for all his Norman vassals to meet him in arms at the town of Avranches on Michaelmas-day, 1158.

The young Duke of Britanny hastened to avert the storm that was now gathering over him. Everything indeed seemed to indicate that it would crush him : Eudes had established, by services in the field, great claims upon the King of France, and was now making use of them in order to deprive his stepson of his patrimony : Henry of England was offended by Conan's seizure of Nantes, and the King of France left the decision of the whole dispute to that monarch ; while Henry, gathering his soldiers in Normandy, was preparing to enter Britanny in the two incompatible offices of enemy and judge.

In mollifying him, then, lay Conan's only hope, and he consequently hastened in person to Avranches, immediately ceded the town of Nantes to Henry, and gave up to him also the territory then called *Pays de la Mie*, that is to say, everything between the Loire and the Vilaine. Such an

important argument immediately gained the decision of the judge, who pronounced a sentence favourable to Conan, fixed him in the Duchy, and took possession of the acquired territory, with a force which seemed more than proportioned to the undertaking. It might be intended to overawe any partisan of Eudes ; but Henry employed it, immediately after, to punish the revolt of one of the nobles of Poitou, which probably might have ended in a more general insurrection, had it not been promptly quelled. About the same period, he induced the Count of Blois to cede Amboise and another fortress, which he held upon the frontiers of his dominions, and recovered various places that had been dismembered from Normandy, during the contentions between Matilda and Stephen.

Henry was now beyond all doubt the most powerful monarch in Europe : he possessed, in right of his descent from Matilda, and the approbation of his vassals, all Normandy and England. The Princes of Wales had been reduced to do homage and to promise peace. Anjou, Maine, and Touraine descended to him from his father ; Aquitaine was his, in right of his wife. His subjects were obedient and contented ; his vassals, brave, warlike, and experienced ; his revenues vast and increasing ; his renown high for wisdom, policy, and arms. But all these vast possessions could not diminish — perhaps they rather increased — the spirit of acquisition which was the ruling passion of his nature. There yet remained something to be gained, and Henry prepared to risk a general war rather than not obtain it.

In the year 1158 or 1159, a crusade, against the Moors of Spain, was proposed by Louis King of France, to Pope Adrian, and Henry promised to take part therein with his firm friend and ally, the French monarch. Louis even began to levy troops, and carried on his preparations very far ; but Adrian refusing to sanction the crusade, the King of France submitted, and gave up the project. Whether

Henry, in listening to the proposal of the neighbouring king, had in view to favour his own purposes in another quarter, without ever really intending to pursue the enterprise ; or whether he seriously thought of joining in the crusade, and only turned his mind in another direction when the project was abandoned, I cannot tell. Certain it is that he continued his preparations, gathered together large forces in all his continental states, and, while Louis believed that he was occupied with the design of driving the Moors from Spain, he was in fact putting himself in readiness to assert an old claim of his Queen, Eleanor, to the rich County of Toulouse. In pursuit of this object, he entered into alliance with the Counts of Blois, Nismes, and Montpellier, and for the same purpose negociated a treaty with Raymond, Count of Barcelona, who was virtually sovereign of Aragon ; though it would seem he did not assume the name of King, in consequence of his marriage with Petronilla, the heiress of that kingdom. In these negociations the name of Richard Plantagenet, afterwards King of England, appears, for the first time in any great diplomatic transaction, and we shall therefore now proceed to the history of that Prince himself, although, of course, for many years after this period, his individual history merges in that of the nation.

Digitized by Google

HISTORY OF THE LIFE
OF
RICHARD CŒUR-DÉ-LION.

BOOK I.

RICHARD PLANTAGENET, afterwards King of England, was born at Oxford, in the month of September, 1157. He was the third son of Henry the Second and Eleanor of Aquitaine. His eldest brother William being born in France, before his father's accession to the throne, had been acknowledged heir-apparent by the great Council of the nation; while the second son, Henry, was formally recognised as second in the succession. We may deduce, perhaps, from the fact of Henry having required his parliament to acknowledge his second son, then an infant, as heir to the crown in case of his brother's death, that the eldest son of Henry and Eleanor was from his birth of a weak and sickly habit. Certain it is, however, that he died soon after; and the other children of the King and Queen appear to have inherited a constitution of iron. Thus at the time of Richard's birth very little probability existed of his ever ascending the throne of England. Nevertheless, it would appear that from the very earliest period, Henry the Second destined for his son Richard an important share

of his continental dominions. Although the promises of monarchs as well as those of other men, are, unfortunately, not always to be depended upon, and although the treaty, in which the name of Richard first appears in any matter of importance, was afterwards abrogated by unforeseen events, yet we discover therein distinctly the intention of his father, both to divide that territory amongst his children, which he had been at so much pains to unite in his own person, and to bestow upon Richard a large portion in the partition.

The treaty to which I refer was concluded between Henry II. and Raymond, Count of Barcelona, the actual sovereign of Aragon;* and, by this treaty, the English king engaged that Richard his second surviving son, should marry the daughter of Raymond and Petronilla, the King undertaking to give Richard the Duchy of Aquitaine, on the consummation of the marriage. The prospect indeed was remote, for Richard was at this time less than two years old; and it is very possible Henry might justly calculate that a thousand things would intervene to change his relations with the Count of Barcelona, before the period arrived for fulfilling his engagements. Still the treaty, though it did not prove binding in regard to his arrangements with Raymond, implied a promise to his second son, which might be difficult to evade at an after period.

There can be little doubt indeed that, in this instance, one of the weaknesses and contradictions of Henry's character displayed itself. He was, it would appear, politic, far-seeing, prudent, and cautious even to an excess; and

* Raymond, I believe, as I have said before, never did assume the name of King, and we are told that he actually refused to take that title, which the Aragonese nobles wished to confer upon him. According to William of Newbury, after having pointed out the superiority of Barcelona over all other counties, he ended his speech. "Proinde malo esse comitum primus quam regum nec septimus."

yet, such was the strength of his passions and the vehemence of his desires that, when any object was to be gained which he had very much at heart, he forgot every consideration of the future, rather than forego his purpose. This peculiarity is apparent in a thousand acts which he performed in the course of his life, one of which we shall have to notice very shortly.

In the present instance, the advantages to be gained by an alliance with the Count of Barcelona overbalanced all those considerations of policy which led him to strive for the augmentation and consolidation of his dominions, and, as we have said, he promised to bestow Aquitaine upon his son Richard. Many other causes, besides the inducement of this alliance, led Raymond of Barcelona to join eagerly in the warfare against his namesake of Toulouse; and while negotiating with him, Henry had contrived to encircle the lands which he himself claimed, by persons who were enemies to the actual possessor, and whom he had bound to himself by treaties and promises. One of the principal of these was Trencaval, whom William of Newbury calls Trenchveil, Viscount of Beziers and Carcasonne, who had many ancient causes of hostility towards the Count of Toulouse. It would appear, indeed, that a league had existed between various noblemen in the neighbourhood of the County previous to the assertion of Henry's claim,* and that the English monarch took advantage of

* Nothing has been more thoroughly confused and mis-stated than the whole of these transactions. The account which I give in the subsequent paragraphs contains nothing that has not been proved beyond a doubt by Dom Vaissète, in his History of Languedoc. All his surmises, and very often indeed, his deductions, I have not admitted, because he evidently wrote with a view to support a preconceived opinion. Various gaps in the chain of cause and effect will therefore be found, where positive proof of the facts could not be obtained, and these the reader must supply as his judgment may suggest. The facts ascertained, however, show Lord Lyttleton's statement to be incorrect in

that league to secure his operations against his adversary, by binding all the confederates to himself.

many particulars ; though not nearly so much so as that which has since been put forth by Dr. Lingard, for which I can find no authority whatsoever. He says, "The father of Queen Eleanor had possessed the Duchy of Toulouse in right of his wife Philippa, but, under a pretence of a sale or a mortgage, had conveyed it to her uncle Raymond, Count of St. Giles. At his death, the right of succession to all his dominions devolved on his daughter ; and Raymond, that he might retain Toulouse, concluded a treaty with her husband, the King of France, by which the territory was secured to him as the dower of his wife Constance, the sister of Louis." Now, there is not one single assertion contained in the above sentences that irrefragible facts do not prove to be erroneous. William X. Duke of Aquitaine, Eleanor's father, never possessed a foot of ground in the territory of Toulouse, and it is very doubtful whether he ever put in a claim to the county, which was not named a duchy. Next, Eleanor never had an uncle Raymond, Count of St. Giles. Her uncle Raymond was Prince of Antioch, and never, by mortgage or any manner, possessed an acre in the County of Toulouse. The Count of St. Giles here spoken of by Dr. Lingard must either be the famous Raymond of St. Giles, to whom Lord Lyttleton supposed the county mortgaged, or the younger Raymond of St. Giles, who possessed Toulouse when Henry attacked it. Now, if the first be meant, Eleanor's father, William X. of Aquitaine, was four years old when that prince died, William being born in Toulouse, in 1100, and Raymond dying in Syria, where he had been some years, in February, 1105. If it be the Raymond who held the city in the days of Henry II., that prince was born in 1134, and Eleanor's father died in April, 1137. No such transaction therefore as a mortgage could have taken place between either of those parties. We are next told that, "Raymond, that he might retain Toulouse, concluded a treaty with her (Eleanor's) husband, the King of France, by which the territory was secured to him as the dower of Constance, the sister of Louis." Raymond succeeded his father Alphonso in 1148, being then between thirteen and fourteen years of age : Eleanor was divorced from Louis the Young in 1152, and, on Whitsunday of the same year, gave to Henry of Anjou her hand, and with it her claim upon Toulouse. Thus, if any treaty took place between Raymond and Louis, in regard to the claim of the latter upon Toulouse, it must have been between 1149, when Louis returned from the Crusade, and the spring of 1152, when he divorced Eleanor. However, poor Constance could

The claim put forward by Henry to the County of Toulouse, is one of the most obscure and difficult points in the history of the times : the statements made by many contemporary writers, especially those on the part of the English monarch, being distinctly proved to be erroneous, by the dates of deeds and charters, which show what is false, without giving any direct clue to the truth. The title set forth by Henry was that the grandfather of his wife, Eleanor, having married the heiress of the County of Toulouse, had afterwards mortgaged that territory to the Count of St. Giles. Neither the mortgagor nor his son had ever been able to redeem the mortgage ; and the county had still remained in the hands of the Counts of St. Giles, who took also the title of Counts of Toulouse. The rights of Eleanor, however, remained entire, and were transferred to Henry after her divorce from Louis, the King of France. Such was the statement of the English King, and he now determined to advance his claim without further delay : but at the same time he endeavoured to guard against any interference on the part of the King of France, by asserting—it would appear justly—that the same claim had been made by that monarch at the time that Eleanor was his wife ; so that he had absolutely recognised her right to the County. How this is to be reconciled with the known facts is difficult to discover ; but the following particulars may serve to show, that some considerable mis-statements were made by the partisans of the King of England, in regard to the history of the County of Toulouse.

have no share in the matter ; for she was at that time married to Eustace, son of Stephen, King of England, to whom she was united in 1140, and who did not die till the summer of 1153. Thus Louis had no claim whatever to Toulouse, in right of his wife Eleanor, at any period of time when Constance's hand was at liberty, so that the County could not have been given as her dower. Constance did not marry Raymond till 1154, the first year of her widowhood.

Pons, Count of Toulouse, left two sons, William and Raymond, the first named of whom succeeded to the County towards the year 1061. His second son, Raymond, on the decease of his mother, succeeded to the County of St. Giles, and, at the death of William his brother, which took place about 1093, he took possession of the whole of the territory of Toulouse, having accumulated in his own person, previous to his brother's death, a number of the adjacent Lordships, which rendered him already one of the most powerful princes in France. His brother William, however, left one daughter named Philippa, who was first married to Sancho, King of Aragon, and afterwards to William, Duke of Aquitaine. How it occurred that this Princess did not succeed at once to her father's territories, is by no means clearly shown ; but it is a very curious fact, and one which strongly confirms the assertion that Raymond had acquired some hold upon Toulouse, by lending money to his brother, that he had taken the title of Count of Toulouse, in many of his public acts, before his brother's death, even so far back as the year 1088.*

The testimony of William of Malmesbury, likewise, is of very great importance, as that writer died before the pretensions of Henry had been mooted, and from him we distinctly learn that William, the father of Philippa, had sold the territory of Toulouse to his brother, for a sum of money, several years before his death. Whether such a sale, if absolute, and not by way of mortgage, was legal, might be a question ; but it is perfectly clear that Raymond continued in undisturbed possession of the County till his departure for the Holy Land, which took place in October of the year 1096. Sancho of Aragon, the husband of Philippa, was killed by an arrow at the siege of Huesca, in

* It is clearly shown, however, that Raymond's claim was resisted by many of the vassals of his brother, which is admitted even by Dom Vaissete.

June, 1094 ; and it would appear that his widow, after the short mourning of a few months, married the Duke of Aquitaine, named William IX. What transactions took place between that Prince and Raymond of St. Giles, between the period of his marriage at the end of the year 1094 and the pilgrimage of Raymond, two years after, there are no means of ascertaining ; but it is certain, however, that almost immediately upon his departure, William IX. and Philippa seized upon the County, to the exclusion of Bertrand, the eldest son of Raymond St. Giles, whom he had left in possession, and that they therein exercised sovereignty until the year 1100, calling themselves in their public acts, Count and Countess of Toulouse. Two sons were born to them in the town of Toulouse ; and it would appear by a codicil to the will of Raymond, dated from Syria, in the year 1105, that he had dropped the title of Count of Toulouse, on quitting Europe for the Holy Land. It is evident that their hold of the County was forcible, however, for it cannot be doubted that Raymond left his son Bertrand in possession ; but what the claim was which they made to justify their entrance into Toulouse, does not appear. It would seem not to be doubted, indeed, that Bertrand was not legitimate : either he was the son of a concubine, or he was the son of one of the relations of Raymond, whom that Prince had married, notwithstanding her being within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity, and from whom he was obliged to separate by the menaces of the church. However that might be, the Duke and Duchess of Aquitaine dispossessed Bertrand, and held the County till 1100, when, as strangely, they seemed to have yielded it again to Bertrand, from whom they had taken it, without any of the reasons which have been assigned for such conduct being supported by sufficient proof.

The account given by Henry's partisans, however, is supported by two or three known facts. In the first place it is

proved that William IX. took the cross at Limoges, in the year 1100, almost at the very time that he yielded the County to Bertrand ; and it seems very generally admitted that Bertrand entered peaceably into the County, and paid or lent a sum to William and Philippa. From that time it would appear that Bertrand remained in quiet possession, till he also took his departure for the Holy Land, in imitation of his father and in accordance with the spirit of the age. In the mean time, Raymond of St. Giles, having married again before his departure for the Holy Land, had another son by his wife, Elvira of Castile. This son, named Alphonso, was born in Syria while his father was carrying on the siege of Tripoli. He was baptized in the river Jordan, and was brought over into France, while still in his infancy, towards the year 1107. Not long after that period, his brother Bertrand, having taken the cross, as we have said, departed for the Holy Land, carrying with him his only son, and leaving Alphonso in possession of the County of Toulouse and all those European territories which he had obtained either by succession or by negotiation with the Duke of Aquitaine.

This proceeding would seem as strange as any other part of the history. It is very true that men were prompted by the spirit of the age to abandon their territories in Europe, and to seek establishments in the East ; but Bertrand, on various occasions, showed a grasping disposition which would lead one to suppose that, if he had held the County of Toulouse in any other manner than conditionally, he, like many other Crusaders, would have put his dominions under the protection of the Church, in order to insure himself against any reverses which he might meet with in Syria.

How long William of Aquitaine remained in Palestine does not appear ; but he suffered Alphonso, though a mere youth, to hold Toulouse till the year 1114, when he again

took possession of the County, and his wife therein exercised acts of sovereignty during that and the following year. We are assured that it was not without bloodshed that Alphonso was dispossessed, and that in the strife, the Bishop of Pampeluna was killed in the streets of Toulouse. It is proved, however, that from the year 1114 to the year 1119 William and Philippa were recognised as Count and Countess of Toulouse, not only by the great body of the people, but by the famous Bernard Aton, Viscount of Béziers, and a near relation of the race of Toulouse.

Philippa died, it would seem, about the year 1119, though the history of her life is very obscure after 1115. Her husband, however, married again after her death, and led an army into Spain, in order to support Alphonso, King of Aragon, against the Moors, leaving Toulouse but weakly guarded. His absence afforded an opportunity which the friends of Alphonso did not neglect; and we find that prince fully re-established in the County in the year 1122, after which period it was never regained by William IX. of Aquitaine, though he continued to assert his claim, and waged war, from time to time with his competitor till his own death, which took place in 1127.

Up to that date it is distinctly proved that the claims of Philippa and her branch were never entirely abandoned; but during the reign of her son, William X., over Aquitaine, I do not find that any fresh attempt was made to recover Toulouse. His daughter Eleanor, however, was married to Louis the Young, King of France, in 1137, immediately after her father's death, and she conveyed to her husband her claims to the County of Toulouse. In 1141, Louis advanced at the head of an army towards the capital of Alphonso, and laid siege to it upon grounds that are not distinctly stated by the historians of the time; but there can be scarcely a doubt in the mind of any one that the pretensions of Eleanor upon Toulouse were those which

brought the arms of the King of France before that city,* especially when we are told by William of Newbury, who may be considered as contemporary, that Louis did make application for the restitution of Toulouse.†

A vigorous resistance was offered by the citizens to the efforts of the French King ; and Louis, as was always the case when long protracted operations were necessary, got weary of unfruitful warfare, and withdrew his troops.‡ His quarrels with the Count of Champagne succeeded, and those again were followed by the Crusade, which occupied all the time that intervened ere his divorce from Eleanor and her marriage with Henry. Thus the claim of that princess had never, in fact, been abandoned, and Henry merely renewed an application which had been frequently made before. The situation of Louis indeed was changed ; and it was as much his interest to oppose the claim of Eleanor now as it had formerly been to support it. Her husband was already too powerful as a neighbour and too powerful as a vassal ; but, besides such political motives for taking a new view of the question, Louis had a strong incentive in his affection for his sister Constance, who, after the death of her first husband, Eustace, had married Raymond, the actual Count of Toulouse.

Nevertheless, it would seem that Henry—either too confident in the influence he had acquired over Louis, or believing in a sense of justice in kings, and trusting that the French monarch would be ashamed to oppose in the pre-

* We find (lib. iv.), the states which Eleanor was supposed to bring to her husband, thus named in the history of Vezelai, by Hugh of Poitiers—all Aquitaine, Gascony, the land of the Basques, Navarre, as far as the Pyrenean mountains, and as far as Charles's Cross.

† The words of William of Newbury are : “ Reliquit autem unicam filiam heredem, quæ cum Regi Francorum Ludovico nupsisset, idem Rex uxoris nomine Tolosam repetiit.”—*Lib. ii. cap. x.*

‡ Adrian Vital gives us to understand that Louis met with difficulties, dangers, and discomforts, on which he had little calculated.

sent case pretensions which he had formerly advocated—imagined that the King of France would remain neuter in his strife with the Count of Toulouse. That monarch, indeed, did suffer him to make preparations unopposed, and also to form alliances with the enemies of Raymond of Toulouse: but he might imagine that the forces levied beneath his eyes were still destined for Spain; and he might be ignorant of the negotiations which were carried on both within and without his own territories. Some of the many writers of the life of Becket, however, assert, that Louis positively promised to remain neuter; and, if the authority for this fact were not somewhat doubtful, we might conclude that the French monarch very basely violated his promise.

Meeting with no opposition from the crown of France, Henry proceeded with his preparations for a war, the success of which he would hardly doubt when he contemplated the vast forces at his command. Not contented, however, with the power which he could draw from Normandy, Touraine, Anjou, Poitiers, and Aquitaine, he determined to apply to his English subjects also for assistance in establishing his claim to the County of Toulouse. He accordingly returned to England in the spring of 1159, and found his nobles ready and willing to support him, though there may be some reason to suppose that representations were made to Henry by such as were not inclined to go, in regard to the hardship of serving at such a distance from their native country. Whether remonstrances were actually offered or not, certain it is that Henry felt the hardship, and assigned it as his motive for an act* which, though

* Robert de Monte gives it as Henry's express motive, "Conside-
rans longitudinem et difficultatem viæ, nolens vexare agrarios milites,
nec burgenses nec rusticos, sumptis xl. solidos Andegavensem, in Nor-
manniâ de feudo unius cujusque loriceæ." The scutage in England was
fixed at three pounds for each knight's fee, and was apparently assessed

undoubtedly most convenient and agreeable to him as a King, was an infraction of the grand principle of feudality, greater perhaps than even the establishment of communes. This was an extension of the right of commutating military service for a sum of money, which had long been possessed by all Abbots and Bishops, to inferior vassals who held by knight service. He had already made a similar arrangement with his Norman feudatories; and no difficulty was found in England, where we are told the enormous sum of one hundred and eighty thousand pounds of silver was raised by this new tax. At Worcester, where there is reason to believe that Henry obtained the sanction of the great council of the nation for this innovation upon feudal institutions, the King and Eleanor caused themselves to be crowned for the third time; but, at the offertory, the monarch and his queen laid down their crowns upon the altar, solemnly vowed to God never to be crowned again.* All

by the King himself, with the consent of the council of Worcester. Some copies of the Norman Chronicle say forty solidi of Anjou, some sixty. It is difficult to ascertain the true value of money at that time, as it had suffered great depreciation; but I find a curious document in Le Blanc, p. 153, which shows that the mark of Anjou was equal to 15 sous Tournois, and that the mark of silver was equal to 13 sterling solidi 4 denarii of England, or 53 sous 4 deniers Tournois.

* I have to apologize for the frequent repetition of the word crown in the above sentence; but in this and in many other instances, I have thought it better to seek for accuracy of expression rather than sweetness of sound. In the present case I have ventured to differ from a great authority. Lord Lyttleton translates Hovedon thus: "But when they came to the oblation, they laid them down on the altar, and vowed to wear them no more." I am inclined to think that this was not the exact meaning of the author, whose words seem to me to imply that a solemn coronation of the King and Queen took place, and that they vowed not to have so expensive a ceremony performed again. His words are,— "Idem rex Henricus, tertio, fecit se et Elenor uxorem suam *coronari* in solemnitate Paschali apud Worecester: ubi cum ad oblationem venient, deposuerunt coronas suas, et eas super altare obtulerunt, voventes

Henry's greater vassals prepared with alacrity to accompany him ; and even Malcolm, the young King of Scotland, put himself under the banner of his cousin of England, in order to win his knightly spurs in the ranks of one who had already acquired such great renown.

The person, however, who displayed the greatest zeal in the cause, and the most ostentatious alacrity in taking the field, was no other than Thomas Becket, Archdeacon of Canterbury, the King's Chancellor. Very few years had elapsed since the Bishop of Winchester had been seen in arms during the civil wars of England ; and the Bishop of Beauvais was still somewhat notorious for his military propensities. It could not therefore astonish any one in those days to see a personage who had not taken priest's orders—which was then the case with Becket—at the head of an armed force ; but it might very well surprise all Europe to hear that a man who five years before possessed nothing but an inferior dignity in the English church, was now able to maintain in the most sumptuous and ostentatious manner a force which no other leader in the realm of England could bring into the field.

Armed as a warrior, and with certainly the wisdom of the serpent, if not the harmlessness of the dove, the future saint followed his monarch at the head of seven hundred knights paid and entertained by himself. It is not to be supposed that the forces of the other vassals and adherents of Henry were at all in proportion to those of the Chancellor ; but there can be no doubt that the army which the English king collected in Perigueux and Aquitaine, and which continued to assemble from the middle of Lent till the end of June, was fully sufficient to overthrow the whole power of the Count of Toulouse, had that prince remained unaided.

Deo quod nunquam in vitâ suâ de cætero coronarentur." Don Vaissette, in his History of Languedoc, mistakingly asserts that this took place at Winchester.

The Count, however, appealed for assistance to Louis the Young ; and adjured him by all the ties of kindred, as well as the principles of sound policy, to prevent a faithful vassal and near connexion from being overwhelmed by another vassal already more powerful than his sovereign. Louis was moved ; and acting by impulse, as he generally did, he determined to succour the Count of Toulouse. Policy pointed out the same line of conduct ; but had policy at all weighed with the King of France in this matter, he would have interfered in favour of the Count sooner, and would have also interfered in a very different manner. As it was, Louis suffered Henry to commence his march, and then threw himself suddenly into Toulouse with a handful of men.

This event greatly disconcerted the King of England. There were many in his camp who urged him to attack Toulouse at once, and make the King of France a prisoner, as a just punishment for his inconsistency and breach of faith. But the English monarch listened to more cautious counsels : Louis was his sovereign as far as his continental territories were concerned ; and though the vassal had an undoubted right to make war on his feudal lord when that lord injured him or opposed him in his just claims and pretensions, yet Henry, both a sovereign and a vassal, was inclined to give more weight to the deference due to sovereignty than to the extreme rights of a feudal tenant. He therefore determined not to attack the city of Toulouse itself ; and contented himself with subduing a great part of the Count's territories.* The important town of Cahors

* Few matters have been more strenuously contested than the question whether Henry did or did not besiege the city of Toulouse. Don Vaissette, writing as a Frenchman, labours hard to prove that Henry did besiege the city, and finding he could not take it, made the presence of the King of France within the walls an excuse for retreating. That could be no excuse, however, if, as the historian himself shows, Louis

was taken, and nearly the whole, if not the whole, of Quercy was subdued.

In the meantime, however, the King of France, whose presence had only been sufficient to deter Henry from capturing the capital of the county itself, had taken better means for protecting the territories of the Count of Toulouse, by creating a diversion in his favour, and causing an attack to be made on the frontiers of Normandy. The incursions in that quarter were carried on by the King's two brothers, Robert, the turbulent Count of Dreux, and the sanguinary Bishop of Beauvais. It is true that they effected but little, in a military point of view, though the ravages which they committed caused great suffering amongst the subjects of the English King. The reports from that part

was in Toulouse before Henry commenced the siege at all. He cites, however, strong authority to prove that there actually was a siege, namely, Galfridus of Vigedois and Hovedon, the latter of whom, certainly, has these explicit words : "Eodem anno Henricus rex Angliae, magno congregato exercitu, obsedit Tolosam et quamvis ibi diu sedisset." I am disposed, however, to agree with Lord Lyttleton, in relying upon the host of authorities which are opposed to Hovedon. William of Newbury, Robert of Mount Saint Michel, in the Norman Chronicle, Diceto and Brompton, all agree in using such terms as leave no doubt that they did not believe Henry had ever laid siege to that town ; and Matthew Paris, copying Roger of Wendover, says distinctly that Henry only went towards Toulouse, capturing the cities in the neighbourhood. "Sed Rex Anglorum ipsam civitatem non assiluit, ob reverentiam Regis Francorum." It is true that not much faith is to be placed in the historians of Becket's life. I therefore do not rely here on Fitz-Stephen ; but there is another writer whom Lord Lyttleton does not cite, and whom he probably had not read, but whose authority as a Frenchman, and belonging to an Abbey greatly favoured by Louis the Young, is of weight, though not absolutely contemporary. William of Nangis, a monk of St. Denis, who was probably born toward 1240, possessed every means of information ; and he distinctly states that Henry advanced towards Toulouse ; "but as the King of France, Louis, had entered it in order to defend it, the King Henry retired, not daring to besiege his Lord."

of his dominions, however, alarmed Henry ; and after having detached the Count of Blois to attack the territories of the King of France in the neighbourhood of Orleans, he followed himself soon after with the main body of his army, leaving his bellicose Chancellor to pursue the war in the County of Toulouse. Nor did Becket carry it on ineffectively ; he showed more energy than Henry himself had done, and in a wonderfully short space of time he had captured three fortresses, it is said by storm, each of which had been deemed impregnable ; and with his own hand he overcame a French knight of great renown in single combat, bringing away his horse as a trophy.

Henry, in the meantime, had hastened back into Normandy, with a numerous force, although he lost a considerable number of distinguished noblemen by the way. Amongst others was William, the young Count of Boulogne, the only surviving legitimate son of Stephen, Henry's predecessor. Hamo, the son of the Earl of Gloucester, another cousin of the King, also ended his life in this expedition. Malcolm, King of Scotland, however, shared a better fate, and returning with some distinction in arms, received what he had so long coveted, the honour of knighthood* from the hand of the King of England.

Henry's force, together with the troops which he had left in Normandy, proved quite sufficient, not only to protect the province, but to carry the war into the enemy's country ; and immediately entering the Beauvoisis, with the usual horrid barbarity not only of those but of much later times, he retaliated upon the unhappy people of that district, all the cruelties which had been committed by the

* Some say that the King of Scotland was knighted by Henry in a meadow near Perigueux ; and such probably was the case, for the account of Geoffrey of Vigeois, a contemporary, and one who lived amidst the scenes he describes, confirms that statement. Hoveden, however, says it was at Tours.

Bishop of Beauvais in Normandy. An act of vengeance which probably might be more serviceable to himself, was effected in the capture and destruction of the strong town of Gerberoi, and several other lesser fortresses. Henry always obtained, however, far greater advantages by negotiation than he gained by arms ; and in the present instance, by a treaty with Simon de Montfort, Count of Evreux, he acquired the three important towns of Montfort, Epernon, and Rochefort, which brought his garrisons within a few miles of Paris itself, and affected in a very dangerous degree the communication between the French capital and a great part of the Orleanois.

This situation of affairs alarmed, as it well might, the King of France ; and the arrival of Becket in Normandy, bringing with him reinforcements of twelve hundred Knights, and a body of inferior cavalry, to the amount of four thousand men, soon put it in the power of the English monarch to punish the inconsistency and injustice of Louis far more severely than he had hitherto done. Henry, however, with that moderation in success, which was one of the finest traits of his character, did not exact more than he might reasonably expect. Negotiations took place ; and in the first instance a truce was concluded from Christmas, 1159, to Whitsuntide, 1160 ; which was followed by a treaty of peace in the subsequent year, every article of which evidently shows how tired of the war Louis had become—we might indeed say, how terribly humbled he appeared to be by its consequences. All that Henry could possibly demand was granted by the French King. He retained every thing he had acquired in the County of Toulouse, except some towns which he restored, not to the King of France, or his brother-in-law, but to his own ally, the Viscount of Nismes. These, however, were merely ancient possessions, of which the Count of Toulouse had formerly stripped the sovereign of Nismes. All Henry's

allies were protected by the treaty, not even excepting Simon de Montfort, though that Nobleman had undoubtedly been guilty of a most notorious act of treason. Henry, on his part granted to the Count of Toulouse, as we find by the treaty, a truce from the first day of Pentecost next ensuing, for the period of one year, which suspension of arms is expressly stated to be consented to by the English monarch for the love of the King of France ; but Henry does not in the slightest degree abandon thereby his title to the whole County of Toulouse, his right being in some measure acknowledged by the terms used by the French monarch.* At the same time the Count of Toulouse is bound not to molest Henry in the possession of the conquered territories during the truce : though he, and the allies of the King of England, are left at liberty to wage war upon each other if they think fit.

The most important part of the treaty, however, in a historical point of view, is to be found amongst the first clauses. It is there declared that the King of France does render unto the King of England all those rights and territories in France which had been enjoyed by Henry I., excepting the Vexin, of which certain portions are declared to belong to the King of England, and certain portions are retained by the King of France. Even these, however, he agrees to give up to Henry as the marriage portion of his daughter on her union with the son of the King of England, and promises seisin thereof, at all events, within three years from the next day of Assumption, after the conclusion of the peace. It is, moreover, distinctly stipulated that, if the marriage of the Princess of France with Henry's son take place before that term of three years was expired,

* Louis does not say that he *grants*, but that he *restores* to Henry those rights and possessions of the county of Poitou of which he speaks. The words used are, "Præterea rex Franciæ *reddidit* regi Angliæ omnia jura et tencmenta comitis Pictavensis."

with the cognizance and consent of the Holy Church, the seisin and possession of the whole shall be given to Henry. In the meantime, the castles of the Vexin were placed in the custody of the Knights Templars till the specified period for delivering them up to the English Monarch. Three great fiefs of the Vexin, comprising a large extent of territory, were secured to the King of England immediately, and for ever; but the whole territory was the object in view, and that was speedily obtained.

The treaty had not been signed six months, when Constance of Castile, the second wife of Louis the Young, died in childbed of a daughter named Adelais; and with indecent haste the King of France proceeded to marry again within one fortnight of the death of Constance. The funeral baked meats did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables, at least to Henry, who was, it would seem, in Paris at the time of Constance's death, having gone thither in order that his son Henry might do homage to the French King for the Duchy of Normandy. Constance had ever been a firm friend to the King of England, and her death itself was a serious calamity to that Monarch; but when Henry saw that the new bride chosen by the King of France was a sister of the Count of Champagne, who had long been inimical to him, he felt both grieved and alarmed, and quitted Paris hastily, without waiting to witness the nuptials of the widower of fourteen days.

The English King seems at once to have perceived that a change of policy would take place towards him; and his first step on returning to Normandy was to devise measures for rendering the engagements of the King of France with regard to the Vexin, irrevocable. His proceedings, indeed, must have been very quick; for we find that he was in Paris in the beginning of October, and that in November of the same year he had every thing prepared for putting his plan in execution. Circumstances indeed favoured him

greatly. It happened that, at that time, a schism which disturbed the church caused the Pope Alexander to send the cardinals of Pisa and Pavia, as legates to the King of England. These legates were now with Henry in Normandy ; the Princess Margaret of France was in the custody of Robert de Neuburg, one of Henry's vassals. The three Knights Templars, Robert of Pirou, Tostes of Saint Omers, and Richard of Hastings, were gathered together in the palace of the King of England. The legates gave the full consent and approbation of the Church to the marriage of the Princess Margaret with the young Prince Henry ; the ceremony was performed between them—the bridegroom being seven, and the bride not four years old—and the Templars, on the summons of the King of England, having witnessed the marriage, and knowing the existing treaty, gave up the strong castles of Gisors, Neufle, and Neufchatel, with the whole of the rest of the Norman Vexin.

It might perhaps be necessary for the King of England to proceed in this hurried and clandestine manner, but Henry's dignity, if not his policy, would have been better secured by pursuing a more open course ; and the secrecy and haste of the transaction cast suspicion in the eyes of Europe upon the rectitude of his conduct and the justice of his claims. That his claims were perfectly just, and that there was nothing in any degree fraudulent in the transaction, nobody who reads the treaty can in any degree deny. Whatever the writers on the French side of the question might say, there was no doing away the fact that, not only had the marriage been contemplated as a thing likely to take place speedily, and provided for by the treaty itself, but that the marriage so provided for was exactly the sort of marriage that was now solemnized. Louis called it indeed but the shadow of a marriage ; but the union which he had referred to in the treaty could be by no means of a more

complete kind, inasmuch as no period, within the specified limits of three years, could have brought Henry and Margaret to a really marriageable age. Espousals, such as took place in the present instance, were perfectly common in those days, and even to a time nearly approaching our own. As much solemnity had been given to them as was possible, by the presence of the Legates and the full consent of the Church. The marriage was therefore in every respect what had been contemplated by the treaty, and the Templars merely did their bounden duty in giving up the Vexin to him who had now the only just right to claim it.

Justice, however—at least in the interpretation of treaties—was not in those days more to be found than at present. Louis, stimulated into wrath, by the instigations it is supposed of the Count of Champagne and his brothers, the Counts of Blois and Sancerre, accused Henry, in vehement terms, of fraud and deceit, drove the Knights Templars, who had delivered the castles to Henry, out of his kingdom, and instantly commenced preparations for war, instead of remonstrating in moderate terms, as he might have done with dignity and justice, upon the secrecy with which the King of England had thought fit to envelop his proceedings.

While the King of France thus made ready to attack Henry in the spring, his three new brothers-in-law were not idle; but with activity far surpassing that of the King himself, prepared to carry on a desultory war against the English monarch from the side of Blois. This sort of predatory frontier warfare was one of the most annoying features in the contests of those days; but the purposes of the three Counts were soon made evident to the King of England, by their assembling a large body of troops, and proceeding to fortify, in a very strong manner, the castle of Chaumont, in the County of Blois.

Henry, however, on his part, had not taken the decided step which he had adopted, without being prepared for the

consequences ; and he no sooner received intelligence of the measures pursued by his adversaries, than he took up arms to meet the coming evil. Without waiting for any more formal notification, he marched at once with a large force towards Chaumont, which was claimed as an old fief by Hugh of Amboise, one of his own vassals. The Counts of Champagne and Sancerre, thinking their proceedings quite secure, had retired with their forces, leaving their brother, the Count of Blois, to complete the fortification which they had begun. The news of Henry's rapid march caused that Prince also to retire, and the English monarch seized upon the town and territory in question, which he immediately gave or restored to Hugh of Amboise, who was a hereditary enemy of the house of Blois.

This done, the King of England returned into Normandy, and employed the winter season in putting all parts of his continental territories into a state of complete preparation to resist the efforts of his adversaries. The Vexin of course obtained a particular share of his attention, both as a district peculiarly necessary to the security of Normandy, and as one which opened the way almost to the gates of Paris. The strong castles which it contained were put in the most perfect condition of defence ; men and provisions were supplied wherever they were wanted ; and the whole frontier, before the spring had advanced far, was bristling with spears and armoured with fortresses.

As soon as the weather would permit him to take the field, Louis sent an army into the Norman Vexin ; but every city, town, or castle that he approached, was found completely prepared for resistance, and he dared not undertake any siege, but retired before Henry, who, at the head of a large force, followed him across the frontier, and seemed determined to bring the quarrel to the issue of battle. Henry, however, was as cautious as he was active, and was very willing to hear proposals of pacification at

all times, well knowing that whatever was gained must be upon his own part, if he granted, rather than demanded, a peace. The Pope interfered to reconcile the two monarchs of France and England ; several of his envoys busied themselves to remove any difficulties that might lie in the way ; and a truce was concluded in the month of June, almost as soon as the war had begun.

The fickle character of Louis rendered such changes in his determinations by no means extraordinary ; but in the present instance there might be motives of a very powerful kind operating upon his weak and bigotted mind. A schism at that time divided the church, and caused great scandal in Christendom, in consequence of a double election which had taken place after the death of Pope Adrian IV., if that could be called a double election, indeed, in which three votes were given to one candidate, and twenty-three to the other.

The person who obtained the greatest number of votes, was Orlando of Sienna, Cardinal of St. Callisto, and Chancellor of the Roman Church. His opponent was Octavian, Cardinal of St. Cecilia. The former had already shown himself a marked enemy of the Emperor, Frederick Barbarossa ; and we are even told that he had bound himself by an unlawful oath, with other confederates, to pursue measures the most hostile to the Emperor and his party in Italy. So much party rancour indeed ensued, and so many falsehoods were propagated on both sides, that the above statement may possibly be a calumny, as the moral and religious character of Orlando stands very high. It is evident however that he was decidedly opposed to the Emperor, and that Frederick strove, with undisguised anxiety, to raise Octavian to the Papal throne.

The Popes had been daily encroaching upon the old rights and privileges of the empire ; and after a struggle of centuries, had succeeded in excluding the Emperors

from all power in the election of the Bishops of Rome. On the other hand, as it could be clearly proved that the Emperors had formerly the right of confirming the election, Frederic made every effort, if not to resume the full exercise of that right, at least to regain some portion of the authority which his predecessors had weakly abandoned. The opportunity afforded by the double election of Orlando and Octavian was of course taken advantage of by the Emperor. He did not indeed pretend to resume at once the power of deciding between the two candidates, as such a proceeding might have armed against him the jealousy of the whole church ; but he declared that the election should be investigated before a council of the Roman empire, and that by its decision the claims of the two Cardinals should be judged. In the meantime, Orlando took the name of Alexander III., and Octavian assumed the name of Victor III. The latter, however, was recognized in Rome, while Alexander made his escape with difficulty from the Imperial city, where he ran some risk of his life, and was consecrated by the Bishop of Ostia, on the twenty-ninth of September, 1159.

Frederick proceeded immediately to summon a council to meet at Pavia, for the purpose of trying the election and deciding between the two claimants. The actual judges on this occasion, were the clergy of the empire ; but a number of other persons attended, amongst whom were all the great Princes of the Germanic body, or envoys from their courts. The Kings of England and France, too, had ambassadors present to watch the proceedings. Fifty bishops, and a number of the inferior clergy* presented themselves, and Victor attended in person, submitting entirely his claims to the assembly.

* William of Newbury says, that there were none but Italian and German bishops, but with an immense multitude of the inferior orders of prelates, meaning of course abbots.—*Lib. 2. Cap. 9.*

Alexander had also been summoned ; but though a man of high character, devout, and respectable as well as wise, he took a step which was so far imprudent, that, as a necessary consequence, it determined the decision of the council against him, and might have also added to the party of his opponents a power which would have rendered that party overwhelming. The ambition of Victor was personal ; that of Alexander clerical ; Victor sought to elevate himself ; Alexander to extend the power of the Church. The latter was in fact, the representative of papacy with all its grasping ambition, with all its perversion of reasoning, with all its assertion of false facts, and assumption of unreal rights ; but it was only as a representative that he was all this : as the pope, not as the man, so that the evil points of his official character gained an undue lustre from the brightness of his personal virtues. In his character of Pope, then, he refused to be present at the council of Pavia, or to submit to its decrees ; and, besides assuming that he was Bishop of Rome, which was the very point in question, he put forth an assertion perfectly false and groundless, as his reason for not yielding obedience to the summons. That assertion, however, comprised a principle which, though never perhaps so distinctly announced before, had been laboriously and studiously inculcated and assumed in every indirect manner by many other pontiffs his predecessors. The reason he gave for not attending the council, was "that Christ had given to St. Peter and his successors the privilege of judging all cases in which the Church was concerned, which right the see of Rome had always preserved, never having submitted to any other judgment."

He must have counted very much upon the ignorance of Europe in matters of history, and he must have counted very much also on the weakness of Louis, King of France, and Henry, King of England. The feebleness of the first

he might well reckon upon ; but that Henry should so much forget his own policy, and the warnings which the whole reign of Stephen afforded, as to give any support whatsoever to a prelate who put forth so monstrous, so false, and so unreasonable a doctrine, Alexander had certainly no right to believe. The Popes by one step had put themselves above the authority of the Emperors ; by another they had put themselves above the interference of the people of Rome : Alexander now aimed to put them above the authority of the councils : and certainly it was a daring and extraordinary act.

The admission of such a doctrine as that which Alexander propounded would have left no known power of deciding between any two candidates for the papal dignity, and the only appeal left would have been to the sword, which, indeed, in those days was very generally considered as affording the best means of arriving at the decision of the Almighty. The council of Pavia, however, was not inclined to admit the plea of Alexander, and pronounced him guilty of contumacy for not appearing.

Victor and his friends : or rather Frederick Barbarossa, for he undoubtedly was the soul of the opposition to Alexander : urged two strong objections against the latter Pontiff ; first, that he and the Cardinals who had elected him had taken an unlawful oath, which disqualified them by the canons from electing at all ; and in the next place they rested, it would seem, though not so strongly, on the fact, of the Roman people not having sanctioned the election of Alexander. The council of Pavia examined witnesses, took what information it thought necessary, and, as might well be expected, decided with very little hesitation in favour of Victor.

It is not at all necessary here to investigate who was really the duly elected Pope, to ascertain which fact would require an examination into many of those obscure parts of



history, which it has been the interest and practice of the see of Rome to darken and perplex. In the first place, to arrive at any thing like a decision on that point, we ought to inquire in whom the power of election did really exist—whether there was a right of confirmation in the Emperor, whether the people of Rome participated in any shape in the electoral authority; for we cannot suppose the mere bull of any Pope could take away the rights of the persons who elected him. In the next place we should have to discover what portion of truth and falsehood was to be found in the statements of Alexander and of Victor, which perhaps could never now be ascertained.

The principal question before us, and one of much importance to the sequel of this history, is the part which Henry took in the controversy, the policy by which he was guided, and the effect which that policy produced upon the authority which he transmitted to his son. We may infer from various acts of the King of England, that he had very early conceived the design of diminishing the exorbitant power which the Church had acquired in England during the troublous and unhappy reign of Stephen; and had determined not to suffer the clergy to withdraw themselves altogether from the reach of the civil law. Taking it for granted, then, that he had conceived this design as a well-considered part of his great scheme of policy, the reason assigned by Alexander for not attending the council of Pavia should have led Henry at once to oppose the elevation of a man who so distinctly claimed exemption from every authority upon earth, and who thus announced, that if he made his pretensions good, the ecclesiastical matters of the Christian world would have no other judge but himself, that neither synods, nor kings, nor emperors, no, nor councils themselves, which had always hitherto been held supreme in authority, would have any power in restraining the despotic sway of the Bishop of Rome.

In this mighty controversy, however—one of the most important in its character and its results that modern Europe has ever seen—Henry does not appear to have given the slightest consideration to the effect which its termination would have upon his great scheme of policy. The only object which he seems to have considered, was how his leaning to this or to that side would affect the objects of his ambition at the time, how he could gain advantages here or there, remove the animosity of the King of France, or retain possession of territories that were in danger. It is curious and instructive to trace how passions and weaknesses, turning us in a small degree from the course laid out before us by reason and experience, work out sooner or later the bitterest of disappointments, and in many instances, the complete frustration of the object desired. From the recognition of Alexander by Henry the Second, sprang the long series of misfortunes which attended the strife with Becket, the overthrow of all his best schemes for emancipating England from a part at least of the tyranny of Rome, and the defeat of his efforts to render the civil law of the land the judge of all men in civil cases, under whatsoever denominations the parties might appear. This is clearly and distinctly shown in the history of a more advanced period of Henry's reign.

After having made his escape from Rome, and having been driven by the dangers that surrounded him into Campania, Alexander sent legates to the Kings of England and France, in order to claim their assistance in establishing his right. Similar legates were despatched about the same time to those monarchs by Victor; and the mind of the King of France was now far more taken up and affected by the schism in the Church, than by the wrongs which he conceived had been done to him by Henry, or by the war which he had commenced against that prince. The envoys of Alexander were busy in France at the conclusion of the

truce which we have noticed, in the end of June, 1161,* and had evidently a share in bringing it about. Scarcely was it concluded, when Louis called a synod to meet at Beauvais,† in order to examine into the rights of the two claimants to the papacy, and to determine upon the course of France. It would appear that Henry was now completely reconciled to the French monarch, and co-operated with him in regard to the papal controversy ; for almost at the same time that Louis held the Synod in Beauvoisis, Henry called a similar assembly of the clergy of his continental dominions to assemble at Neufmarché, in Normandy. Shortly after a synod was called in England likewise ; and the result was in all instances the same—the recognition of Alexander, and the rejection of Victor. One particular, however, is worthy of notice in the reply of the assembly held in England, which is, “that the Council declared it would be contrary to their duty, and to the prejudice of the majesty of the crown, to pass any judgment upon the matter ; and they therefore merely tendered their approbation of the claims of Alexander as *advice* to their sovereign.” Perhaps the very tone of this reply might mislead Henry into a belief that he would always find prelates as humble and unambitious as those who now dictated it

It appears that Louis and Henry agreed in the most cor-

* It is not known whether Alexander dated his letters from the period of his election, or the period of his consecration ; but I find a letter from him, dated in September, in the third year of his pontificate, and addressed to Henry, and urging him to make peace with the King of France ; the date assigned to it is 1162, but it bears on the face of it no other date than the year of the pontificate, and I am rather inclined to imagine that it should be placed earlier.

† Lord Lyttleton implies, that the Synod of Beauvais was held in 1160, after Henry's return from Toulouse ; but it is clearly proved by Don Vaissette that it took place in the month of July, in 1161.

dial manner to act together in regard to the papacy ; and immediately after the decision of the Gallican and Anglican Churches had been obtained, they determined to call a new general council to assemble at Toulouse, and examine once more the claims of the two prelates. This fact evidently shows, both that the Kings of England and France were once more upon terms of friendship, and that Henry's claim to Toulouse had been silenced for the time either by admission or compromise ; as the treaty of peace, which he had concluded with Louis in the preceding year, had ended at Whitsuntide, 1161. As Henry and Louis were both to be present at the Council, it is not probable that the English monarch would have consented that the place of meeting should be at Toulouse, had he not been able to appear there as a friend rather than an enemy.

Though matters had been thus proceeding unfavourably to Victor in France and England, neither that Prelate nor the Emperor had been inactive in endeavouring to promote his interests in those countries. Messengers had been sent by Frederick to urge both upon Henry and Louis the decision of the Council of Pavia. The English monarch was the Emperor's friend and ally ; and it was certainly far more Henry's interest to conciliate Frederick, and support his power, than to follow where Louis led, and seat one of the French faction in the chair of St. Peter. Frederick's influence might therefore well be great with the English monarch. Such, however, was not the case with Louis ; but there, Victor employed interest of another kind. The Count of Champagne was his relation, and was at this time very powerful in the Court of the King of France. His voice, then, was constantly and eagerly raised in favour of Alexander's opponent ; while Victor applied himself earnestly to engage some of the Bishops and Nobles of France to support him, writing with his own hand to many of them, and, as in the case of the Lord of Montpelier,

sending a legate to some even of the nobility, as to sovereigns of the highest station.

Little progress, however, was made either by the representations of Frederick, or the solicitations of Victor himself. The King of France, indeed, wavered in some degree, in consequence of the entreaties and remonstrances of the Count of Champagne ; but still the opinion of the English and French clergy was of much weight ; and the greater part of those who appeared as judges at Toulouse, had already announced their sentence in the synods of Beauvais and Neufmarché. The cause of Victor, therefore, was not likely to be more fortunate at Toulouse, than that of Alexander had been at Pavia. The assembly was respectable, indeed ; for besides the Kings of France and England, there were the Legates of the two aspirants to the Tiara, five Cardinals, a hundred Bishops and mitred Abbots, and Ambassadors from the Emperor and the King of Castile, as well as a number of noblemen and gentlemen of France and Normandy. As far as we can now judge, however, the meeting was not near so numerous as that of Pavia ; but it immediately proceeded to go through the appearance of examining the claims, and then unanimously decided in favour of Alexander.

It would have seemed after this event, that nothing remained for the monarchs of France and England, but at once to acknowledge Alexander in such a manner as to pledge themselves to his cause for ever. Such was not the case, however, though they both in all their acts recognised his authority, and suffered him to exercise the jurisdiction of Supreme Head of the Church, both in France and England. The Council of Toulouse excommunicated Victor, and all his adherents ; and, as a matter of course, Victor, having possessed himself of a share in the thunderbolts of the Church, did not think fit to let them lie idle. The authority of the Council of Toulouse was denied by

Victor and the Emperor, its decrees were held to be schismatical, and its Pope worthy of excommunication. In order that all this might be solemnly announced, a new Council was called by the Emperor at Lodi, where Victor was once more declared Pope ; and Alexander and his faction were excommunicated.

It was after his authority had been fully recognised, and his election declared valid by all the clergy of France and England, that the title of Alexander ran the greatest risk of being denied in one, if not in both of those kingdoms. The Count of Champagne, with his two brothers, possessed territories sufficient to make them very formidable to so weak a monarch as Louis ; and they had also obtained a degree of influence over him, after his marriage with their sister, which rendered them the most dangerous opponents that Alexander could encounter. If Henry, seeing the great political mistake that he had committed, had joined with the Count of Champagne in the beginning of the year 1162, there cannot be the slightest doubt that Louis would have gone over to the party of the empire ; and that if the clergy had not resisted such mutability of conduct, France would have led the way in acknowledging Victor. Henry, however, refrained, affecting to be entirely guided by the king of France ; and, in the meanwhile, Frederick employed the Count of Champagne to influence the mind of the French monarch by every means in his power. The first step which the Count gained, was to persuade Louis to receive a letter from Victor, brought by the hands of one of that Prelate's agents, who was admitted to the French Court. The next point was to bring the king to listen to a new suggestion from the Emperor regarding the means to be taken for the purpose of terminating the schism in the Church. The proposal was to hold another general Council, in the town of Avignon, at which both Popes were to be present, and once more to investigate the whole facts of

the election, and either acknowledge one Pope and depose the other, or depose both, and elect another. The next effort was to induce Louis to send an ambassador to the Emperor for the purpose of treating upon this matter. Not only were all these steps gained, but the wily Count of Champagne obtained for himself the post of ambassador, and set out with all speed to confer with the Emperor at Pavia.

Such was the state of affairs in France at Easter, in 1162 ; and on the 11th of April, in that year, the Pope Alexander, feeling fully convinced of a warm and favourable reception in France, landed at Maguelonne, and made his arrival known to the king of France. He was gratulated by the nobles and the people of the south of France, with the utmost joy and enthusiasm ; the Count of Toulouse went down to Montpellier to receive him ; all the other princes of Languedoc gathered round him, and rivalled one another in showing him respect : and the lower orders crowded upon his path wherever he went. All this, however, was not sufficient to compensate for the first news that Alexander received after his landing in France. It was, that new hesitation had taken possession of the mind of Louis ; that he was listening to proposals from the Emperor, all of which tended to call his election in question, and that he had even sent an ambassador to the imperial court of Pavia, to treat in regard to the assembling of a new Council. Alexander's indignation at the unworthy conduct of the king of France overcame his prudence ; and when two envoys from Louis, chosen—as if for the purpose of marking his change of feeling—from an inferior order of the clergy, came to offer him formal congratulations, he received them with coldness and haughtiness so marked that the weak king gave way to a violent fit of passion, and committed himself with the Emperor so far that it was scarcely possible to retract. The Bishop of Orleans was immediately despatched to communicate with the Count of

Champagne, and to bear to that nobleman a letter from the King of France, in which Louis acknowledged that he regretted having recognised Alexander. He also gave his ambassador full power to agree to the convocation of a new Council, and to settle all the particulars regarding it with the Emperor. Very seldom, indeed, has so much been left to the discretion of a minister, as was now trusted by Louis to the judgment of the Count of Champagne. That prince, of course, took advantage of his power to forward his own purposes, and entered into a treaty with the Emperor, by which it was agreed, that Louis and Frederic should meet at St. Jean de Losne, where the Saône, at that time, formed the boundary between France and the Empire, accompanied by the Bishops and Nobles of both countries, and also by the two claimants of the Papacy. A number of persons were chosen to judge the cause of Alexander and Victor ; and the Emperor on his own part, with the Count of Champagne on that of Louis, promised to abide by their decision, and instantly to recognise the Pontiff who should be declared duly elected.

One or two particulars are worthy of notice, in regard to this agreement. In the first place, the decision of the cause was not left to ecclesiastics alone, it being expressly stipulated, that a number of knights were to be among the judges. In the next place, the idea of deposing both Popes was abandoned ; although there can be no doubt that, if the allegation of the Emperor was true—that Alexander, by taking an illegal oath, had rendered himself incapable—such a proceeding would have been perfectly just, as Victor could not pretend to a sufficient number of votes to give him the Papacy, from which Alexander had excluded himself.

The Count of Champagne, however, suffered this proposal to be dropped entirely ; and having obtained the powers already mentioned from his sovereign, he gave Frederic the fullest assurance that Louis would abide by

the decision of this new council. There can be no doubt that both the Emperor and the Count were perfectly certain of what the decision of the council would be, for they were both well aware that Alexander, who had refused to submit his cause to a court composed entirely of ecclesiastics, would by no means present himself for judgment before an assembly where laymen assumed to themselves the right of dealing with the highest ecclesiastical affairs.

How far the promises of the Count of Champagne went cannot well be told, nor is it possible to discover to what length his newly kindled anger at Alexander carried the unstable king of France. It is certain, however, that Frederic and Victor both entertained the most sanguine hopes of winning France from the party of their opponent; and that Victor actually despatched nuncios to the court of the French king.

Rumours of all these transactions reached Alexander at Montpellier, and of course alarmed him greatly, especially when he found that his enemies were daily making progress, notwithstanding his holding a council in the south of France,* at which a number of Bishops and Abbots were present from the distant parts of that kingdom. He accordingly endeavoured, as far as possible, to do away the effects of his imprudent conduct, and employed the good offices of the Bishops of Langres and Senlis to work upon the mind of the king, while at the same time he gained the more powerful influence of the king's own brother, whom we have had occasion to speak of as the Bishop of Beauvais, but who had now been elevated to Rheims. Not long after, namely in the month of July of the same year, he wrote to the Bishop of Soissons also, beseeching him to employ his whole influence in his favour with the King of France, and if possible to prevent him from going to the meeting with Frederic. This letter was written from

* At Montpellier, 17th May, 1162.

Mende, while the Pope himself was hurrying from Montpelier to intercept Louis on his passage towards the Saône.* The excuse which Alexander made to cover the real purpose of his journey, was that a severe famine was at that time felt in Montpelier. But such could not be his true motive, as we learn from William of Nangis, that the same famine desolated the whole of France. There can be no doubt, that having learnt the exact time when Louis proposed to set out to meet the emperor, he now hastened to confer with him by the way, in order, if possible, to prevent him from keeping the engagements entered into by the Count of Champagne. It is possible, indeed, that Louis himself may have summoned him, as he had promised the emperor to bring him to the conference ; but at all events, the Pope hurried his journey as soon as the king's intentions were known, and arrived in Avergne towards the middle of August, while Louis on his part advanced into the Bourbonnois, and took up his abode at the monastery of Souvigni. At the latter place, conferences took place between the Pope and the king ; and although Alexander firmly refused to go to the proposed meeting, he gained an influence over the mind of the French monarch, which never after failed.

Louis was perplexed by his resolute opposition, and more than once became angry, insinuating, that if Alexander were really innocent of the charges brought against him by the emperor, he would not shun an investigation in which his innocence must appear ; but nevertheless, he appears to have been much impressed with the dignity and imposing demeanour of the Pontiff, while all his habitual

* Lord Lyttleton and many other historians have mistakingly asserted, that Alexander quitted Montpelier in the month of June ; this could not be the case, for there is still extant a Bull signed by his hand, in the ides of July, 1162, dated from the City of Montpelier. This document is dated in full, both with the year of indication of the Papacy, and of Christ.

thoughts and feelings took part with Alexander, and acknowledged the principle upon which he grounded his resistance ; a principle to which Louis had been devotedly subservient during the whole of his reign and life ; namely, the supremacy of the Roman Church, and its independence of all temporal authority.

A small concession made by the pontiff in this part of the transaction, in all probability, did much to regain the favour of the king, without at all sacrificing his own views. He agreed that Louis should be followed to the meeting with Frederic by some of the cardinals who had accompanied him into France ; but it was expressly stipulated and understood, that they were not there to plead his cause, or to make the slightest submission on his part, but merely to declare his right before the bishops and nobles there assembled. This was all that Louis could obtain, and he then set forth to meet Frederic, very much perplexed by the determination of Alexander, though resolved, it would seem, not absolutely to abandon his cause.

On the arrival of the King of France at Dijon, the situation of all parties in Europe was very extraordinary. Louis himself was accompanied by very few military followers, being surrounded, as was usually the case, by a number of ecclesiastics. The emperor, on the contrary, had collected an immense force immediately on the other side of the Saône, being followed to the place of conference by a multitude of the princes and nobles of the empire, forming a large body of well-disciplined soldiers, whom he had just led to victory under the walls of the devoted city of Milan. In the meanwhile, Alexander remained at a distance from the scene, watching the events ; and Henry the Second of England, at the head of a considerable army, which he had not been weak enough to disband in consequence of a truce with so fickle a monarch as Louis, held himself ready.

within his own continental dominions, to act as circumstances might require.

The whole fate of Europe was at this moment in the balance, and a few hours decided some of the greatest events in history. At Dijon, the King of France was met by the Count of Champagne, who immediately communicated to him the treaty he had entered into with the emperor; but Louis would willingly have denied that the powers of the count had been sufficiently extensive to pledge his sovereign to such important acts. The count of Champagne, indeed, had the king's own letter for his authority; but the consequence of the situation in which they were respectively placed, was a sharp altercation between the monarch and his ambassador, which of course tended to irritate the mind of Louis against Victor. The Count of Champagne, however, had pledged himself to the emperor in a manner which rendered any breach of the agreement on the part of Louis, a most dangerous step. In signing the treaty with the emperor, it would appear, the count promised on oath, that if the sovereign whom he represented failed to perform the conditions which he subscribed, he would convey his homage from Louis to the emperor, and hold his vast and important territories, on the north and east frontier of France, as a fief from Frederic.

Louis hesitated, and at the time appointed for the first conference, the emperor and Victor appeared upon the bridge of St. Jean de Losne, with a splendid train of nobles and ecclesiastics; but Louis and Alexander did not keep the engagement. Alexander, on his part, it was well known, would not come; and Frederic, after waiting a short time for the appearance of the King of France, retired with indignation, reproaching Louis bitterly for his want of faith and courtesy.

At his departure he left some deputies to confer with the

French monarch in case he should come in the end, but those deputies had no power to agree to any proposal respecting new arrangements ; and the very next day the Count of Champagne notified to the French king, that, according to the oath he had taken, he felt himself bound immediately to transfer his homage to the emperor, the King of France having failed to keep the engagement which his ambassador had been authorized to make in his name. The situation of the King of France was now lamentable. He could expect nothing but immediate war at the hands of the emperor, and he was totally unprepared to resist it. Frederic was within a few miles of him at the head of a large army, which might make him a prisoner at any time by a sudden advance ; and one of the principal vassals of his crown was about to abandon him, in order to swell the party of the monarch he had just incensed. Under these circumstances, Louis acceded to a proposal which he would not have entertained for a moment, in a less desperate state of affairs, and bound himself to attend a council at the end of three weeks, to bring with him Alexander, to hear the cause of the two pontiffs tried, and to abide by the decision of the notables of France and Germany, by whom it was to be judged.

Louis, even while he made this agreement, well knew that Alexander could not be brought to the council ; but after having been obliged to give hostages of such quality as the Count of Nevers, the Count of Flanders, and the Duke of Burgundy, it seemed absolutely impossible that he could escape from ultimately recognizing Victor.

In the meantime, however, Henry the Second of England, towards whom the King of France had displayed but scanty ceremony in treating concerning a new Council without him, had sent neither Barons nor Prelates to the bank of the Saône ; but on the contrary, had some time before despatched the Archbishop of York, and the Bishops

of Lisieux and Evreux, to attend upon Alexander, who was now in Berri. The King himself had remained at the head of his army ; but the moment Alexander heard of the jeopardy in which the French king had placed himself, he besought the English monarch to march with all speed to his rescue, in order to counterbalance by his power and military strength the dangerous preponderance of the Emperor. Henry paused not to deliberate, but marched into France at the head of a large army, entered Berri, and advanced as far as Bourgdieu, where Alexander then resided. At the same time he sent messengers before him to announce his approach, and intelligence of his coming soon reached both Louis and the Emperor.

There was another foe, however, in Frederic's camp, which was much more terrible and difficult to oppose than even the arms of the English monarch. A general dearth reigned upon the banks of the Saône, as well as through the rest of the land. Louis could find food in Dijon for himself and his priests ; but Frederic, with his mounted barons and their long trains of soldiery, found neither corn nor grass ; and, after having endured the pressure of famine in his camp as long as possible, he was forced to yield to circumstances and retire to his own country.

To what extent he was influenced, in thus leaving the field, by the approach of Henry's army, can hardly now be told, nor does it at all affect the course of history. He knew that the King of England had marched to the assistance of the King of France, and his friendship towards his British ally was of course cooled in proportion. On the other hand, however, Louis was, for the time, as grateful for Henry's prompt assistance, as Frederic was offended by his interference. To him he seems to have attributed entirely his deliverance from the dangerous situation in which he had placed himself ; and, at the meeting which took place immediately afterwards between Louis, Henry,

and Alexander, on the banks of the Loire, a peace was concluded between the two monarchs, by which Henry was permitted to retain every thing that he had acquired, without the restitution of any part of the territory in dispute. The most remarkable incident, however, of this meeting on the banks of the Loire was, that Henry and Louis received the Pope on foot, and while he, on a horse splendidly caparisoned, rode towards the pavilion prepared for him, the two monarchs held the bridle on either side, to do him honour. Whether the motive of Henry, in performing this act of degradation, was to secure the friendship of the Pope, or to please the priest-ridden King of France, certain it is, that, in holding the bridle for the Pontiff, he virtually brought his head below the stirrup of Thomas à Becket.

His dissensions with that prelate I shall have to speak of hereafter ; and it will be enough to notice, in this place, the elevation of Becket to the highest dignity in the English church. In the year 1161, died Theobald, the good old Archbishop of Canterbury, and for a considerable time no new Archbishop was appointed. The advocates of the Roman Catholic Church have asserted, that this long interval was owing to Henry's desire of appropriating as long as possible the revenues of the vacant see. It is clearly proved, however, that the delay proceeded from the conscientious opposition of a great body of the English Clergy to the person whom the king thought fit to nominate, whose habits and character rendered him most unfit for the archiepiscopal dignity, and most obnoxious to the English Clergy. That person was Thomas Becket, Archdeacon of Canterbury, Chancellor, and favourite of the king. He had not yet taken priest's orders ; he had distinguished himself as a soldier, as a courtier, and as a negotiator ; he had lived a luxurious and worldly life ; he was extravagant in his apparel and his household ; he was notoriously

ambitious and grasping ; and he had caused the scutage for the war of Toulouse to fall with such peculiar weight upon the clergy, that the Archbishop Theobald had threatened with excommunication all who should be concerned in exacting the second instalment.

It is not wonderful, therefore, that the great body of the ecclesiastics of England should as strongly as they dared oppose the nomination of such a person. The famous Bishop Foliot, who perhaps hoped for the dignity himself, most decidedly endeavoured to delay, or to prevent his election ; and even the people murmured at the elevation of a man so thoroughly worldly, to the highest spiritual office in the kingdom. The Empress Matilda, though she had long ceased to take any part in the political events of the day, remonstrated with Henry on his purpose of placing Becket in the archiepiscopal chair, and it was necessary for the king to make a very harsh and unscrupulous use of his authority, before he could force the obnoxious archdeacon into the Cathedral of Canterbury.

Nevertheless Henry persevered ; for Becket had contrived to win at once the favour, the confidence, and the respect of the monarch. He had shown himself, in all their dealings, both subservient and successful, which too frequently form the greatest recommendation to a monarch's favour ; and Henry doubted not that in his projects regarding the Church, he should find in the new Archbishop the same pliancy of will, with the same powers of mind, which his Chancellor had displayed. Indeed, he had every reason to believe that such would be the case ; for Becket had more than once signalized himself in supporting the royal authority against the encroachments of the Church ; and that he had still kept his eye upon the primacy, is evident, notwithstanding every thing that his eulogists thought fit to assert after Henry had made him a martyr, and the Pope had made him a saint.

In judging of the views and proceedings of Henry and Becket, a very nice and critical examination of the authorities is necessary ; for very few documents have reached us free from a suspicion of partiality, except the records of various matters which took place before Becket's elevation to the dignity of primate and which were recorded previously. These are the purest sources when they can be found, but they are very rare, and do not embrace the most important points in question. The next best source, probably, are the letters written about the times of which we now speak ; for, though they are all glowing with the heat of controversy, yet, as in the pleading of a cause, the opposite statements are laid before us, and we can judge between the parties. A more suspicious sort of authority still, is found in the chroniclers who wrote shortly after these events, when Rome had encircled the head of Becket with a halo, which, though very different from the effulgence that shone upon the countenance of Moses, as effectually dazzled the eyes of the monkish beholders ! and we must recollect, that almost every chronicler of that age was either monk or priest. The last and least worthy of all sources of information, is that of the manifold writers of Becket's life, professed eulogists, who seldom or ever suffered the undisguised truth to appear, except when barbarism or superstition led them to mistake a vice for a virtue.

It is sufficiently ascertained, that Becket kept his eyes upon the Archbishopric, that he proceeded to England in order to secure his election, and that it was not till he was perfectly certain of the determination of the king that he affected to be indifferent to the matter, or unwilling to assume the dignity.* The difficulty which Henry met with

* In arriving at this conclusion, we must put aside the authority of Becket's professed eulogists, who made a point of declaring that the humble and self-denying Chancellor, whose train had surpassed that of

in overcoming the repugnance of the English clergy, was far greater than any that he had to encounter in removing scruples from the mind of Becket. Various means of menace and intimidation were resorted to, to drive the clergy to elevate the king's favourite ; and we are distinctly told, by the Bishop of London himself, that he and all his relations were threatened with exile and proscription unless he yielded to the royal mandate, which was borne to England by Richard de Lucy, the king's Justiciary, with orders from Henry himself to use the same means for the elevation of Becket to the see of Canterbury, that he would employ for the elevation of the king's son to the throne of his father, if that father were dead.

Such means, then, being used, nothing remained for the suffragans, and other electors, but to accept the Archbishop upon Henry's recommendation ; and Becket was accordingly elected on the third of June, 1162.* The royal assent was immediately given by Prince Henry, who was then in England and under Becket's tutelage ; and, shortly

any monarch, as they themselves admit ; whose table was that of the most finished epicure ; whose horses and monkeys, and grooms leading them, had dazzled and astonished the French peasantry ; who had absorbed all favours, and had even received the homage of a number of vassals in the county of Toulouse, was too humble and lowly-minded to desire, or even accept, without the greatest unwillingness, a dignity which placed him at the head of his profession in England, and required from him the renunciation of none of his posts and offices. The authority of Foliot is much better, though he was Becket's enemy ; and that prelate boldly charges him in the face of the whole world—while Henry and Becket were both still living—with keeping his eye fixed upon the see of Canterbury, and coming over to strive for it, as soon as possible after it was vacant. See an after note in reference to Becket and Foliot.

* This is the date mentioned by Lord Lyttleton. Dr. Lingard places it on the 30th of May. Thomas Wikes says it was III. nones of June ; but the matter is of no great moment.

after, the new Archbishop proceeded to Canterbury, took priest's orders one day, and was consecrated Archbishop the next. We are told, that the only person who ventured to make any observation upon this strange and indecent transaction, was the Bishop of Hereford, who remarked that the King had worked a miracle, having changed, within four and twenty hours, a layman and a soldier into a priest and an archbishop. The King did not resent the jest, even if it was related to him, for we find this same Bishop of Hereford very soon after translated to London.

These events occurred while Henry was contending with the King of France, or delivering him from the dangers which he had brought upon himself. In the meantime, however, other important changes had taken place in the state of England, which strongly called for the presence of the monarch ; and Henry having, somewhere about this period, suppressed a revolt amongst the people of Aquitaine, always a turbulent and excitable race, returned to Great Britain in 1163, to pacify, or to punish the Welsh princes, who were once more in arms in the southern part of the principality. The cause of this resumption of hostilities on the part of the Welsh, was principally, it would appear, the violation of Henry's own engagements with Rees ap Gryf-fyth, to whom he had promised certain territories in a compact form and position. The King, however, had given him nothing but territories scattered through various districts, by which his power was bridled, and his dignity decreased. This injury he had borne more patiently than could have been expected, but another inflicted upon him by Walter de Clifford raised his indignation to a higher pitch, and he complained loudly to Henry himself. His complaints produced no satisfactory results : Henry, detained on the Continent, paid little attention to him ; and Rees rose in arms, reducing, in a very short space of time, the whole of Cardiganshire to subjection, and destroying all

the castles which had been built for its protection. About the same time also he overran Pembrokeshire, but was forced to raise the siege of Caermarthen, by the Earls of Cornwall and Pembroke, aided by some of the Welsh princes of the English party. He then retired into the mountainous districts of Brecknock, where he remained in arms at the head of a large force, making war from time to time upon the neighbouring nobles. Henry himself, as we have said, returned at length to England, and advanced into South Wales with a large force, which soon induced the Welsh Prince to submit, upon the mild terms to which Henry was willing to accede. Many of the demands of Rees ap Gryffyth were granted, and he had the satisfaction of obtaining possession of Dynevor, the residence of his ancestors, kings of South Wales.

Thus happily terminated this insurrection ; but the disturbance which Henry was to receive from the valiant inhabitants of Wales was not yet at an end. Scarcely had a year passed, ere Rees ap Gryffyth was once more in arms against the King of England ; and it was more probable that the growing dissensions which sprang up rapidly between Henry and the Archbishop, encouraged the Welsh prince to break the oath that he had so lately taken, than that the murder of one of his kinsmen was really attributable to the Earl of Pembroke. However that may be, Rees ap Gryffyth not only overran and desolated the county of Cardigan, but also carrying the war into Pembrokeshire, attacked and greatly injured the colonies of Flemings, which Henry and several other monarchs had settled there ; and moreover, knowing now that he had little to hope from the clemency of the often offended King of England, he negotiated with all the other Welsh princes, urging them by every argument which could have weight with a high-spirited and patriotic nation, to throw off the yoke of those foreign sovereigns, who had, day by day, cooped them within narrower

bounds, and imposed new badges of servitude upon them. Nor was his oratory unsuccessful. All the Welsh princes, almost without exception, comprising even those who were the most deeply indebted to Henry's clemency and to his generosity, took up arms to cast off his sway, and to recover the independence of Wales ; so that during the autumn and winter of 1164 and 1165, the most formidable rising took place which the English king ever had to encounter in any part of his dominions. A parliament, which met at Northampton in the former year, raised troops for the purpose of making head against Rees ap Gryffyth ; but such were the embarrassments under which Henry laboured from his dissensions with Becket, and from the part which the King of France and the Pope, Alexander, had taken in the dispute, that it was the middle of 1165 before he was enabled to use any vigorous measures for subduing the insurrection of the Welsh.

In order to see what the embarrassments were, which thus shackled the active powers of Henry's mind, it may be necessary now to give some account of the dissensions which had arisen between the king and Becket since the elevation of the latter to the see of Canterbury. Scarcely had the prelate taken possession of his new dignity than a change came over his whole demeanour. It might be that he was seized with remorse for his former course of life ; or it might be, that with the same skilful adaptation of means to an end which he had displayed throughout his whole career, he now made use of every appearance of profound devotion and sanctity, seeing that the elevation which he had so suddenly attained, required that ambition should change its path, and put on the flowing robes of zeal and enthusiasm. If we reject the one or the other of these suppositions, we can but conclude that the Archbishop was one of those Protean characters, the whole form and feature of whose mind suddenly yield under the pressure of circum-

stances ; that he who was the general in the field, the knight in the saddle, the courtier in the hall, the minister in the council, the diplomatist in the cabinet, merely from an honest and straightforward intention of doing well and skilfully in the situation in which he was placed, became also, in one moment, from the change of circumstances, the zealous and devoted churchman, and cameleon-like, received from the shades of his dim cathedral the grey hue of monastic enthusiasm and religious fervour.

We would fain receive the best view of the prelate's character ; and did we not perceive that every change of direction which his vast and versatile powers assumed, tended to his own immediate elevation and the promotion of his own interest, even to the subversion of principles which he had at other times professed, we might conceive those changes to have proceeded from the simple impulses of an honest heart employing a subtle and powerful mind. Or did we find that humility of conduct succeeded reformation of manners—that the hard bed and the frugal meal excluded pride, haughtiness, subtlety, and love of power—we might imagine that his last alteration of demeanour took place from penitence not ambition, and that the object was changed, rather than the means.

However that may be, no sooner did Becket feel the mitre on his brow, than all the externals of the man were changed ; luxuries were banished from his table, long trains of glittering domestics from his palace ; his conversation was of spiritual things ; his companions clergymen and monks ; he was regular and devout in the offices of religion ; and secret penances, and half-hidden mortifications were whispered with wonder through the court of the new Archbishop. While Henry was still zealous in his favour, Becket sent him back the great seal, declaring that the post of Chancellor was incompatible with the high duties of his clerical station, for which he could scarcely suffice : but in

doing so, it would seem that he at once opened the eyes of the king, who, notwithstanding his long-established partiality, now saw, or believed he saw, that the Archiepiscopal dignity had changed the object of Becket's ambition. Perhaps Henry argued, that if Becket resigned his post out of conscientious motives, and because he no longer regarded worldly wealth and authority, he would have given up at the same time the Archdeaconry of Canterbury, which was certainly not compatible with the mitre of the same see. Many another office or emolument he might have yielded also with equal dignity and propriety; but we find that the Archdeaconry was wrung from him with the greatest difficulty, and that he defended his least possession with the utmost pertinacity.

The doubts which had taken possession of the mind of Henry in consequence of Becket's resignation of his office of Chancellor, might produce the first coldness of the king towards him. But certain it is, that on the monarch's return from France in 1163, he received the Archbishop, who met him at Southampton, with a demeanour greatly altered, and it became evident to the whole court that Becket was no longer the favourite. Other causes of dissension speedily appeared; but the first direct opposition which Henry met with from his former chancellor, was in regard to some of the most useful and beneficial purposes which that monarch ever entertained. The subject has been embarrassed by long and complicated details which have nothing to do with it, and all the arts of sophistry have been employed to give a colouring of justice to the resistance of Becket; but I find the main matter in dispute so clearly set forth in the somewhat homely words of Roger Hoveden, that I cannot do better than translate them in this place.* “The king,” he says, “desired by presby-

* The original words of Hoveden are as follows:—*Rex enim volebat*

ters, deacons, sub-deacons, and other rectors of churches, if they should be detected in robbery or murder, or felony, or arson, or similar things to these, should be brought to secular examination, and punished like laymen : on the contrary, the Archbishop said that if a clerk duly ordained, or any other rector of a church should be accused of any thing, he should be judged by ecclesiastics, and by an ecclesiastical court, and if convicted, his orders should be stripped off ; and thus deprived of office, and of benefit of clergy, if afterwards he became criminal, he should be judged according to the will of the king and his bailiffs."

At the very first view, the king's purpose was evidently just and reasonable ; and the eagerness of determination with which he pursued that purpose might have drowned all opposition ; and most likely would have done so, if the original grounds of the question had not soon been lost sight of, in the fierce struggles of Becket to maintain the unjust exemptions and privileges for his order. The causes of Henry's eagerness, to which we have just alluded; are thus described by William of Newbury : " The king being busy in the care of his kingdom, and commanding that all malefactors should be indiscriminately exterminated, was informed by the judges that many things against public order, that is to say, robberies, rapes, homicides, were often committed by the clergy, to whom the

presbyteros, diaconos, subdiaconos, et alios ecclesiæ rectores, si comprehensi fuissent in latrocinio, vel murdrâ, vel felonîâ, vel iniquâ, combustione, vel in his similibus, ducere ad secularia examina, et punire, sicut et laicum. Contra quod Archiepiscopus dicebat, quod si clericus in sacris ordinibus constitutus, vel quilibet alias rector ecclesiæ, columnnatus fuerit de aliqua re, per viros ecclesiasticos et in curiâ ecclesiastica debet judicari, et si convictus fuerit, ordines suos amittere, et sic alienatus ab officio, et beneficio ecclesiastico, si postea foris fecerit, secundum voluntatem regis et bailivorum suorum judiceter.

power of the lay jurisdiction could not be extended.”* He goes on to say, that Henry was informed of more than a hundred homicides already committed by the clergy in England under his reign. This might well move the indignation of the king, and he consequently determined to bring ecclesiastics under the arm of the civil power in cases where offences of such gravity had been perpetrated.

* His words are, “*Pege quippe circa euram regni satagenti, et malefactores sine delectu exterminari jubenti, a judicibus intimatum est, quod multa contra disciplinam publicam, scilicet furtæ, rapina, homicidia, a clericis saepius committerentur, ad quos scilicet laicos non posset jurisdictionis vigor extendi.*” These are the words of a monk ; and certainly this respectable and independent man, living in the midst of the scenes which he describes, may be trusted when he speaks against the prejudices of his order, which as well in this, as in the case of Becket, he does not unfrequently, condemning much of the Archbishop’s conduct, and plainly showing his approbation of the King’s views, even while he censures the weak violence with which Henry’s pursued them. I shall have frequently occasion to cite both Newbury and Hoveden, and it may be necessary here to point out, that the latter was chaplain to Henry the Second. He had, therefore, an opportunity of knowing, fully and completely, all that took place in regard to the dispute with Becket, and most likely had studied it deeply. It may be supposed that his situation near the king’s person gave him a prejudice against Becket ; but we must remember that he wrote long after that prelate’s death, as well as after the death of his sovereign. Becket was by that time canonized, the power of Rome completely triumphant over the weakness of John, every thing was to be gained, and nothing to be lost, by giving the most favourable view of the Archbishop’s proceedings ; and these circumstances, as well as the spirit of his class, which he must have shared with other ecclesiastics, may well be considered as sufficient to counterbalance any prepossession against Becket. His account, too, is simple and straightforward, and deals more with facts than opinions. This part of his narrative, too, may be considered as written purely from his own knowledge. A great portion of the first part of his history is evidently taken from Huntingdon ; and the Abbot of Peterborough has afforded him materials for the latter part ; but between the years 1154 and 1170, Hoveden, I am convinced, drew his information from original sources.

But it was the determination of the Church of Rome, and of Becket, that such a purpose should not be effected. In the very first year after that prelate's elevation, a general council was held at Tours, and one of the avowed objects of the assembly was to provide for the liberties of the clergy, which, as it had already deviated into license of the grossest and most abominable description, evidently wanted circumscription rather than extension. I know not, however, that this object was announced before the council had assembled, otherwise Henry must have been very weak indeed to suffer the whole of his archbishops and bishops, except three, to attend the meeting at Tours, as he did at the solicitation of Alexander himself. What took place between the Pope and Becket on this occasion, can only be matter of conjecture. William of Newbury, however, declares it was reported, that Becket, in remorse at the violent means which had been employed to force him upon the clergy of Canterbury, resigned his see into the hands of the Pope, who as a matter of course took it back to him, and quieted his conscience by absolution. Certain it is that Alexander received him with the utmost distinction ; and, between the prelate and the sovereign pontiff a bond was established, which strengthened by the superstitious zeal of Louis of France, enabled them to overthrow the wisest and most admirable purpose which the English monarch ever entertained.

In speaking as I am obliged to do on this and other occasions, I by no means intend to imply that degree of censure of Alexander and Becket which their conduct would have well merited had they lived in more enlightened times, or been placed in circumstances wherein their eyes could have seen clearly the paths of right and wrong, unobscured by the dim mists of self-interest, and undazzled by the fictitious splendour with which Rome had invested herself. Alexander, on his part, doubtless thought that he only claim-

ed for the Church that which was the Church's right ; and forgetting the more bitter degradation of crime, he might look upon it as derogatory to the clergy to submit to the judgment of laymen. Nay more : he might remember how ignorant, mercenary, and flagitious, as well as cruel and remorseless, many of the judges of the land, and still more the Barons who acted as judges, had proved themselves, not only in England, but over the whole of Europe. He might, at a later period, have urged, that not even the greatest jurisconsult of the day, the High Justiciary of England, was free from suspicion of most iniquitous corruption. He might have put forth the principle, that all men are to be tried by their peers, and that in the age in which he lived none could bear that relation towards the clergy, but clergymen themselves. He might have pleaded many other things to support the claim which he conceived to be in every respect just to the Church, of which he was the head. But, on the other hand, Becket unfortunately, in former controversies with churchmen, had made such declarations of the authority of the crown, that his present pretensions could only be supported by a supposition that the miracle which had changed him into an Archbishop and rendered him devout instead of worldly, had at the same time opened his eyes in regard to the respective rights of kings and clergymen. From whatever source he derived his light, certain it is that he now viewed all things in a different manner, and that he returned from Tours with a full determination to resign none of those privileges which his order had so much abused. He began his proceedings, however, in an unwise manner, claiming as the property of the Church various estates belonging to English noblemen, who had held them for several generations. His plea was, zeal for the Church ; but as the proceeding was exactly in accordance with the grasping spirit which he had previously shown, while the zeal of the Archbishop had slum-

bered in the Archdeacon, men believed him to be actuated far more by avarice than by devotion. These, and various similar acts, not only excited the anger of the king in a tenfold degree, but called upon him the animosity of the nobles, which was certainly contrary to the policy that Becket should have pursued.

Another great error he committed, was, that—instead of taking instant measures to purify the manners of the clergy, to reform the ecclesiastical courts, and to punish with all the severity which the canons permitted, the crimes of the priesthood—he used all his authority to screen clerical offenders, and in some instances to protect persons who had committed the most dark and terrible crimes. This excited still greater anger and indignation, and Henry summoned the bishops of his realm to meet him at Westminster, in order to employ means for putting a stop to such abuses.

In this assembly, the king did not make any direct charge against the Archbishop; but he demanded that the clergy, when proved guilty of heinous crimes, should be given over to the secular arm for punishment.* The king, however,

* A modern writer, in a laborious defence of the clergy of that day, which he has woven into his history, omitting all that would injure his cause, insinuates that it was upon one single case—that of Philip de Brois—that Henry called his clergy together, and “required their consent that for the future whenever a clergyman had been degraded for a public crime, he should be immediately delivered into the custody of a lay officer to be punished by the sentence of a lay tribunal.” This is by no means a just statement; and if—putting aside the account of Stephanides, who, where Becket is concerned, cannot be received by any candid critic—we compare Diceto with Hoveden and with William of Newbury, the one a priest, the other a monk, and inquire what the king did demand, and upon what grounds, we shall find that Henry, discovering that the clergy were in the custom of committing robbery, rape, and homicide with impunity, (*vide* *Guil. Neubrig. lib. ii. cap. 16.*) demanded of his clergy and people, that *according to the laws of his grandfather*, if any clergyman should be taken in (*comprehensus*) the commission of

weakly suffered Becket to confer with the rest of the prelates apart, and their reply went to sustain the archbishop's views, as I have already given them from Hoveden. The king next demanded, whether the bishops would observe the ancient customs and laws of the realm ; and probably there had never before been a period in England, when that question would have produced any hesitation ; but on the present occasion, at the dictation it would appear of Becket, the bishops, with only one exception, replied that they would observe those customs, as far as they could, saving the privileges of their order, and the honour of God and the Holy Church ; the interpretation of which reservation was not difficult.*

Henry, indignant, quitted the assembly, with very slight effort to change this determination, saying, that he saw the bishops were arrayed against him. The next morning he deprived Becket of the preceptorship of his son Henry, and took from him the custody of various places which had long been entrusted to him. Becket was greatly mortified, it would seem, at this result ; but his daring and determined spirit rose to resist rather than to yield. We find, clearly, that the whole of the lay nobility were strenuous in support of the king ; but the bishops on the contrary seem to have been either overawed by the superior abilities of Becket, or by the fear of offending Rome ; and nothing could induce them to declare openly against that prelate, although the

robbery, murder, felony, arson, or any similar crime, he should be examined and punished as a layman. Hoveden, pars post Henric. II.

* The account of Hoveden is slightly different, but in no material particular. He says that of the convocation in 1164, Henry asked, if for his love and service, and for the stability of the kingdom, they would receive and keep the laws of Henry, his grandfather. He goes on to state that Becket answered for them all, saying, "That they would keep them, saving in all things his order, the honour of God, and the Holy Church."

good sense of many of them might lead them to side in opinion with the king. This was the case probably with the Bishop of London, and certainly with the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of Chichester ; and a number of those who did not choose to declare themselves openly, laboured zealously with Becket in private for the purpose of inducing him to make the promise exacted by the king, without the saving clause, which rendered it of no effect. No sort of influence was left unemployed, and the Bishop of Lisieux is said to have come from France in order to prevail upon him to enter into some compromise with Henry.

Nothing was found effectual, however ; Becket remained not only obdurate, but the Bishop of Lisieux, in one of his letters, leads us to believe that he spoke with contempt of the king, and utter disregard of his authority.* It would appear that amongst those who pressed him the most eagerly to submit to the royal authority, were two knights

* In the collection of Becket's correspondence, quite sufficient materials are to be found for judging of the character of the man, and refuting the claims to sanctity which have been set up in his favour, though not, perhaps, to elucidate all the events of his life. Much curious matter is to be found in a letter (No. 85) from Ermulfus of Lisieux, which affords proof—although a modern writer has asserted that “by his contemporaries Becket's change of conduct on his elevation was *universally* attributed to a conscientious sense of duty,”—that there were not wanting many persons to assert that “his ambition was more fully gratified to hold the power independently, and from reverence for his ecclesiastical dignity, which he had formerly possessed from the favour and at the will of another ; that being once thus raised, he could not be content to sit at the foot of the throne, or even by its side, but menaced the crown itself, intending to bring it so far into subservience to his authority, that the power to bestow and support it should principally rest with the church ; that he began with opposing the king's commands, in order that every thing should seem to be absolutely under his rule, as no hope of resistance could be entertained by others, when the royal authority itself was forced to succumb.” This was the man whose conduct was attributed ‘*universally* to a conscientious sense of duty.’

templars, Richard of Hastings, and Tostes de St. Omers, to whom Henry had shown great favour, after they had been driven from France for yielding to him the castles of the Norman Vexin ; and it would seem that they prevailed more with him than any other persons. Nevertheless he still resisted ; and negotiations took place between Henry and the pope, in order to obtain a mandate from Alexander, addressed to the bishops of England, and commanding them to observe the ancient customs and laws of the realm. This was doubtless undertaken in the hope that Alexander's infinite obligations to Henry would induce him to follow the steps of Calixtus the Second, who had granted such a confirmation of the customs of England to Henry the First.

It now appeared that Henry had made a lamentable mistake in supporting Alexander against the Emperor Frederic. Had the King of England either maintained that prelate's claims upon the papacy who had announced opinions favourable to his own views, which was the case with Victor ; or had he even refrained from aiding that prelate who had openly declared principles totally subversive of his wise intentions, till such time as he had established firmly the laws with which he now sought to bridle the licentiousness of the clergy, the English monarch would have found either a willing co-operator in Alexander, under the fear of total abandonment, or else a sure resource in Victor, whose views were perfectly compatible with his own. The pope refused the king's request, except under conditions which would have rendered his consent null ; and Becket had now the clear and distinct support of the papal approbation in his struggle with the king, with the nobility, and with the laws.

On various points connected with this part of the history, different statements exist, which create considerable confusion and obscurity. It is distinctly asserted by Hoveden, however, that about this time, Philip, the Pope's almo-

ner, was sent to England for the purpose of quieting the dissensions which had arisen between Henry and the archbishop ; and that he was authorized by the supreme pontiff, and the cardinals, to command Becket to promise that he would keep all the laws without exception. Nothing can be more clear than the words of the historian ; and it is also certain, that the archbishop did shortly after join Henry at Woodstock and promise unreservedly to observe the customs of the kingdom. The eulogists of Becket have attempted to soften down this act with assertions so ridiculous, as to be unworthy of any consideration.* It is clear, if the best and most impartial contemporary historians are to be believed, that he went to Woodstock ; it is clear that he made this promise unreservedly ; and it is clear that Henry relied upon it perfectly.

It remained, however, for the King of England, having as he believed vanquished the obstinacy of his primate, to obtain the same concession from the bishops whom Becket had stimulated to oppose him ; and for that purpose he summoned a great council to assemble immediately at Clarendon. The meeting took place in the spring of 1164. The eldest persons there present were appointed to draw up from memory the laws and customs of the realm, which

* They asserted that Henry assured Becket he would never require anything of him to the prejudice of the church ; and that all he wished for was, a testimony of respect and submission in the face of his barons, for which purpose a mere shadow of consent would be sufficient. Were it possible to suppose that Henry would be so foolish as to say such a thing, or that Becket would be so foolish as to believe it, the circumstances under which the promise was given would show the falsehood of the assertion altogether. Becket went to Oxford to the king to make this promise, after his conference with the Pope's almoner ; and Henry, so far from showing any disposition to leave the promise vague, instantly called a great council or parliament at Clarendon, for the purpose of defining what the customs were to which the promise referred, and of causing the other prelates and nobles to make a similar promise.

had been so often referred to ; and certainly nothing could be more just or straightforward than this method of defining them. But, when it was proposed that the whole assembly should take an oath to observe them, Becket refused positively to do so. Some writers declare, that the archbishop asserted as his excuse that this was all very different from the general promise he had made the king ; but others, and amongst them Hoveden, state that he did not deny the promise he had made, but only declared that he had greatly sinned in making it, and would so sin no more.*

The king and his nobles were furious at this conduct. Violent and irritable in the highest degree, we may easily believe that Henry could scarcely bridle his indignation ; and for three days the clergy, the monarch, and the barons remained in fierce and menacing debate, in which, if we may trust to the words of the Bishop of London, whose high and severe purity of character renders his testimony indisputable, the prelates resisted every effort to extort from them the oath demanded : “ ready to submit to loss of fortune, anguish of body, endurance of exile, and if God will ed it, even the sword itself,” rather than abandon the course in which their archbishop led them.

It would appear that the prelates from time to time consulted apart ; and “ on the third day,” says the Bishop of London, “ when all the princes and nobles of the realm had been excited to the utmost fury, after a tremendous noise and shouting, they entered the meeting where we sat, and with their mantles cast back, and outstretched arms, addressed us thus : ‘ Listen, oh ye who contemn the statutes of the realm, and will not receive the commands of the

* Et Paulo post congregato clero, et populo regni apud Clarendum, pœnituit Archiepiscopum, quod ipse concessionem feceret rigi. Et volens resilire a pacto dixit se in illa concessione graviter peccasse, et quod in hoc amplius non peccaret.—HOVEDEN, 493.

king ; not ours are these hands that you behold, not ours these arms, not ours even these bodies, but they are those of our lord the king, ready at his nod to revenge his injuries, ready to do his will promptly, let it be whatsoever it will ; whatever shall be his mandate, shall be to us most just, and we will execute it willingly. Change your determination, incline your minds to obedience, in order that you may avoid, while it is yet easy, a peril which soon must be inevitable.' What then ? " continues Foliot, " Who fled ? Who turned their back ? Whose spirit gave way ? "

The bishop goes on to say that no one yielded ; and he names all the prelates present, down to himself, with the exception of Becket, asserting that every one of them remained firm in the defence of the church ; but he then proceeds : " The general of the host turned his back, the leader of the camp fled from it, from his brethren, and from the council ; the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury withdrew himself, and after a space given to conference apart, he returned to us, and spoke these words ; ' It is the will of my lord that I should perjure myself, and at present I submit, and incur perjury, for which I may do penance hereafter.' "

The bishop proceeds to describe the stupified astonishment into which these words cast the bishops. They yielded, however, to the will of Becket, and led by him like sheep, took the oath demanded of them, promising in truth and sincerity faithfully to observe the ancient customs of the country, which had been written down from the general testimony of the elder members of the assembly.

In this transaction, while we see somewhat to regret in the fact that a number of English prelates should ever have combined to struggle for privileges subject to such dark and terrible abuses, we cannot help admiring the firmness, courage, and constancy with which they maintained that which

they believed to be right. The conduct of Becket, however, in this instance, as in all that preceded the parliament of Clarendon, shows the same mixture of greedy ambition, of dark cunning, and base hypocrisy. If the account of the Bishop of London be correct, and if that account was addressed to Becket himself by an eye-witness, who took part in all that was there enacted, the archbishop's conduct on this occasion may very well be received as elucidating the whole of his previous behaviour. This letter of Gilbert Foliot, indeed, has been declared on the most unreasonable grounds, to be spurious, having been suppressed by the librarians of the Vatican.* It seems to

* The first person, I believe, who impugned the authority of this letter, was a gentleman of the name of Berington, somewhat about the year 1790. This author assumes two grounds, changing from the one to the other as he proceeds. He labours hard to show, in the first place, that the letter was never sent to Becket, but was privately circulated by Foliot; or, having been written by him, was never sent, on account of what he calls its libellous character, and was suppressed. His argument to establish this is, that it could not have been sent, as Becket, or John of Salisbury, could easily have refuted it, and never did.

As this is begging a part of the question, if not the whole, such a course of reasoning requires no notice. The worthy gentleman, however, admits that "Here the letter is (i. e. in the Cotton MSS.) and it seems to be authentic. It is equally so with the manuscript itself, which contains five hundred and sixty-two letters, and without date." This is a very important admission, as the Cotton MS. is esteemed one of the most ancient copies of Becket's letters extant. The letters are illuminated, and I have taken means to satisfy myself fully that the writing is considerably anterior to the Reformation.

Mr. Berington goes on next to impugn the credibility of Foliot's statements, principally resting his objections upon what that prelate says in this letter regarding the election of Becket and the forcible manner in which it was carried through. Against this he brings forward Becket's answer to the same charges, when made by the suffragans, and John of Salisbury's letter upon the same subject; both of which distinctly deny that the elevation was anything but regular and canonical, and declare that it was approved of by all. John of Salisbury even goes on to as-

me that no dispassionate inquirer can for a moment doubt that the letter is genuine ; especially as it is completely

sert, that the applause of the Bishop of London on Becket's election, was more strongly marked than any other person. This, be it remarked, was but pleading, by Becket and his most strenuous supporter, a direct denial to a serious charge made by the suffragans as well as the Bishop of London. Such a denial, however, might be held as good by some people against the Bishop of London and the suffragans, did it not happen that two of Becket's most zealous and eager friends give a strong contradiction, both to the assertion of the primate, and to that of his clever but malignant follower, John of Salisbury. In regard to the assertion of the latter that the applause of the Bishop was more strongly marked than that of any one else, we have only to turn to Fitz-Stephen, the panegyrist of Becket, to find the bitter sarcasm with which Foliot vented his indignation on Becket's consecration ; and with regard to the election, which Becket declares to have been perfectly canonical, we have the unfortunate testimony of his friend and devoted companion Alanus, by which we find that he himself acknowledged to the Pope every thing in regard to the election with which Foliot charges him. (See a note farther on upon this subject.) Moreover, the uncanonical character of Beckett's election has nothing to do with the present letter, which only repeats a charge contained in other letters, which no one has ventured to doubt. All this while, Mr. Berington does not advance the slightest doubt that the letter was written by Foliot. He only attempts to prove that Foliot lied against Becket. But as Foliot has the testimony of the Pope Alexander himself to his upright integrity, this would be an indirect proof that the letter was not his, if by any means it could be established that the charges of the letter were false ; for then the Bishop of London could not have made them. What then is Mr. Berington's argument to prove that the rest of the charges were false ? First, that Roger Hoveden, and Diceto, both of whom were in all probability present, give (*he asserts*) "a story, which hardly in a single instance accords with Foliot's." This worthy gentleman is fond of assuming such things without any very great accuracy, and I will show that the statements of this letter are confirmed throughout by the best contemporary authority. The account of Diceto is extremely brief, and as he omits a thousand particulars regarding the parliament at C larendon, he omits these amongst the rest, merely stating the broad result. Hoveden, however, is much more ample ; and I do not scruple to affirm, that in every particular of which, by his station, he could have personal

borne out in all its statements by those other historians of the time, whose account is not marked with suspicion by

cognizance, he confirms the account given in the Bishop's epistle. Foliot puts Becket in mind, in his letter, of what had happened at London and at Oxford. Hoveden tells us what that was; namely, that Becket refused at London to receive the laws of Henry I. without a saving of the rights of his order and the Holy Church; and that upon Henry's anger he followed him to Woodstock (which is what Foliot means by Oxford) and promised the King to receive his laws bona-fide, and without evil intention. "*Se bona fide et sine malo ingenio leges suas servaturum.*" The letter of Foliot then goes on to say, that at Clarendon, when for three successive days the King had tried to draw from the Prelates a recognition of the ancient laws of the realm, and the Bishops had refused to give it unconditionally, the Barons entered and threatened them; upon which the Archbishop retired, consulted with some other persons, and returning, declared that he had made up his mind to perjure himself, and do penance afterwards. How does Hoveden describe the same matter? He says, that at Clarendon, Becket announced his determination to break his word, plighted in good faith at Oxford, and that the King was thereat so angry, that he threatened him with both exile and death. Whether the Bishops consulted in a chamber apart or not, he does not say; but we must remember that in all such assemblies it was the constant custom of the Prelates so to do. What took place in the conference of the Bishops amongst themselves, Hoveden was in no situation to witness, he being merely one of the King's chaplains; but he goes on to tell us what took place at a moment when his very words show that Becket had separated himself, both from the general assembly, then sitting at Clarendon, and from his brother Bishops. He tells us, that the Bishops of Salisbury and Norwich, the Earls of Cornwall and Leicester, and two Knights Templars, *went* to Becket, and prevailed upon him to come, and swear to receive the King's laws. This was evidently when he had separated himself from his brethren, as Foliot describes, and gone to consult apart; and the only thing that is here omitted, is what took place in the chamber where the Bishops were alone, which Hoveden, not being one of them, could not be acquainted with of his own knowledge. Neither he, nor other historians of the time, except Foliot, describe the entrance of the armed men into the chamber where the Bishops were assembled; but Hoveden himself says that there was good cause for alarm, and another contemporary relates the menaces used towards the Bishops in such a manner as to

their being the professed eulogists of the refractory prelate.

confirm, perhaps more strongly, the truth of Foliot's letter upon this point, than even if he had repeated exactly the same words. He says, "There certainly were various officers rushing about the royal chambers, brandishing their shining battle-axes, as if prepared to smite the heads of the Bishops." This is the account of Gervase, one of the best and most accurate historians of the day, connected with the Church of Canterbury, and possessed of every means of information; and it must be contended that this in the strongest manner corroborates the account given by Foliot. The only thing that now remains uncorroborated by collateral proof, are the words used by Becket, that it was the will of his lord that he should perjure himself and do penance after. On this point we can surely have no stronger proof than his own actions. He had already perjured himself to a certain point—that is to say, broken his solemn promise to the King given at Oxford, there can be no doubt; and that he again did so on the present occasion, in taking an oath to observe the customs, and then violating that oath, nobody has ever attempted to deny. The only question is, whether he did or did not, as the Bishop of London declares, meditate the perjury while he took the oath. Gervase says, "He, the Archbishop, did certainly fall in *words*, but quickly coming back to himself, he rose again all the stronger in *works*;" and we find it proved beyond doubt, that Becket, immediately after having taken this oath, sought absolution from the Pope for so doing, and suspended himself from the service of the altar till he had obtained it; which is surely very like *perjuring himself because it was the will of his Lord, and doing penance afterwards*. Thus, then, I assert, in opposition to Mr. Berington, that the story which is told by contemporaries, several of whom were certainly present, confirms in every respect the letter attributed to Foliot Bishop of London; that Hoveden, Diceto, and Gervase, prove that Becket first of all refused to consent to the King's views in London, then followed him to Oxford, and promised to receive the laws which he wished to enforce, retracted this promise at Clarendon, and being threatened with the King's anger, separated himself from the other Bishops, and consulted apart. They prove also, that many of the King's friends and officers threatened the Bishops with their brandished weapons, and that under these menaces Becket gave way, and took the oath to observe the customs, which he instantly violated, and sought absolution, and did penance for taking it. Foliot tells exactly the same story, and adds nothing but two facts which came more immediately under his

It is certain, however, if such a fact may be received as any excuse for Becket's conduct on the present occasion,

own cognizance than under that of the historians—namely, that the officers, who were seen brandishing their battle-axes, as if about to dash the Bishops' brains out, as described by Gervase, did actually enter the hall where they were assembled, and threatened them there, and that Becket, while he took the oath, had not the slightest intention of keeping it, which, indeed his whole subsequent conduct would prove, even if the Bishop had never made the assertion. Thus, instead of being unconfirmed by other historians, the letter is confirmed in every particular.

As far as we have hitherto gone, Mr. Berington seems not to have had a doubt of the authenticity of the letter. It is against Foliot that he fights in defence of his favourite, Becket, and nothing is too bad for the Bishop of London; his letter is declared to be libellous and false, and the bishop is declared never to have sent it to Becket, because he knew it could be refuted.

Rising, however, in his enthusiasm, Mr. Berington next proceeds a step further, finds out that he has done the Bishop of London wrong, declares that the letter is a forgery, written by some anonymous enemy of Becket, and attributed by him to the Bishop of London, in order to give it an appearance of authority. The assertion is a very bold one, but it is supported by an assertion bolder still. "The letter," he says, "must be a forgery, because the Bishop of London could not in the short space of two years, forget the events that had happened at Clarendon;" and he goes on to say, "He, the writer, speaks of the bishops being shut up in one room at Clarendon, and of a third day of the meeting, and of the nobles violently entering their chamber, and of the primate's withdrawing. But none of these things happened at Clarendon. The bishops were not shut up, the meeting lasted but two days, the nobles did not enter their chamber, and the primate did not withdraw." Such is Mr. Berington's very bold assertion. Whether the bishops were or were not shut up in consultation together during a part of the time that they were at Clarendon, we have no evidence but probability to show; but in no other respect whatever, is Mr. Berington justified, even by the absence of evidence, in making the assertions he has made. In two instances, indeed, he goes directly in the teeth of historical facts. It may be a difficult thing to prove how long the parliament of Clarendon did sit, but there is no difficulty whatever in showing that it sat more than two days. For its commencement, we will take the authority which Mr. Berington acknowledges to be the best—that of Diceto, who says that the parlia-

that he was threatened in the most violent and angry manner by the king and by the barons ; and it would appear,

ment met on the eighth calends of February—in other words, the twenty-fifth of January. Thus the commencement is ascertained, but Diceto does not tell us when the session concluded. The constitutions of Clarendon themselves, however, were sworn to by the bishops on the fourth day before the purification of the blessed Virgin—that is to say, on the twenty-ninth of January ; and thus, including the day that the parliament assembled, and the day of the swearing to the constitutions, there were five whole days during which the parliament sat. Such are the dates as given by the very best authority, the Dean of St. Paul's, who is known to have been present on the occasion, who is extremely accurate in his accounts, who had no motive whatever for falsifying the truth, and who was certainly favourable to Becket rather than to Henry—such, I say, are the dates given by him, and by the constitutions of Clarendon themselves. The words of Diceto are, “*Concurrentibus episcopis et proceribus eput Clarendune VIII. kal. Februarii.*” Now it is true that the writers of those days did sometimes invert the Roman mode of counting the calends, and instead of counting back counted forward ; but I cannot find that this was ever the case with Diceto : and if it were, it would only make the matter worse for Mr. Berington's argument, giving three days more for the sittings at Clarendon. But let us see what some other historian gives as the date. Gervase says that the meeting took place on the festival of Saint Hilary—“*in festivitate sancti Hylari.*” This is carrying it still further back, and making the sittings of the assembly last more than a fortnight. By a great stretch, indeed, of the historian's language, one may suppose that Gervase meant that the meeting took place during the quindisme of Saint Hilary, which, though it would make the matter vague as to the precise day, would not give any support to Mr. Berington ; as the very last day of the quindisme still allows three whole days for the sittings of Clarendon. Whence then is it that Mr. Berington derives his date ?

Hoveden unfortunately does not give us any date, but he says nothing whatsoever to support the assumption of Mr. Berington. In regard to the two other points, the words of Hoveden show, as I have before demonstrated, that Becket did withdraw from the rest of the persons assembled at Clarendon. He says that the bishops, and the Earls of Leicester and Cornwall, went to him, and begged him to come with them to the king, in order to promise before the people to receive the constitutions. Gervase says that some of the bishops, who were afraid of the

that while he was absent from the bishops on the occasion mentioned above, the Bishops of Norwich and Salisbury,

king's anger, on account of old offences, *went* to the archbishop, so as to distinctly prove that he was not with the rest; and the words of this author would also lead one to believe that the king was not present when Becket first announced his intention of breaking his word in regard to the constitutions. Gervase says: "When it came to the knowledge of the king, that he intended to recede from his word, the king became furious." Now he would have never made use of this form, if the king had actually heard the prelate's declaration. He and Hoveden would both have used the words, *when the king heard*, if the king had been present. We know that the king was present with the nobles, but, from the words we have stated, there is reason to believe that he was not present with the bishops; and therefore, we may imply that they conferred apart, as the letter attributed to Foliot asserts. No historian except Mr. Berington, declares that during some part of the time at least, the bishops did *not* confer apart; and in regard to the threats used towards the bishops by the friends and attendants of Henry, I have already shown that Gervase completely bears out the statement of the letter, that armed men with naked weapons, did pass to and fro through the chambers of the palace, as if ready to slay the bishops. Let me remark here that there is a little disingenuousness in Mr. Berington's translation of this phrase of Gervase. The historian says, "Discurrerunt certe quidam satellites per cameras regis secures splendidar vibrantes, succincti, et quasi in capita episcoporum irruunt." Mr. Berington translates it, "with their garments tucked up and ready for execution," leaving out all about the bishops. It would not, indeed, have suited his purpose so far to confirm the statement of the letter. That it does confirm, it is evident; for who can doubt that these "Satellites secures splendidas vibrantes- et succincti," were the very same people who, according to the words of the letter, rushed into the hall where the bishops were, "rejectis palliis exertisque brachiis?" No one who is in any degree capable of appreciating evidence. I have, I trust, now shown, that there is no foundation for Mr. Berington's assertion—"that none of these things happened at Clarendon. The bishops were not shut up; the meeting lasted but two days; the nobles did not enter their chamber; and the primate did not withdraw." I have shown that the bishops did probably confer apart, that the meeting lasted several days, that the nobles did threaten the prelates, and probably enter the chamber where they were, and that the archbishop did withdraw. I trust that I have proved, moreover,

and the Earls of Leicester and Cornwall, together with the two knights Templars, of whom we have before spoken,

that Mr. Berington's assertion, that the account given in the letter is at variance with that of contemporary historians, is equally destitute of foundation; and that the three contemporary historians, Gervase, Diceto, and Hoveden, two of whom are known to have been present, confirm in every material point the statements of the letter. The only remaining objection which is urged against the epistle, is, that neither Becket nor his friends replied to it. Whether this be really an objection or not, must be decided in the minds of every one by the opinion entertained of the merits of the question between Becket and the Bishop of London. Those who believe as I do, that the assertions of the Bishop of London, borne out as they are by the concurrent testimony of many independent persons, were perfectly true, that Becket knew them to be so, and that the primate was well aware also that — though none of the bishops had ventured to reveal that speech which the Bishop of London now revealed in the height of his indignation—all of them could bear witness to his having spoken it, will very easily comprehend why he neither answered the charge himself, nor suffered his friends to do so.

It seems to me that in every respect whatsoever, the attempt of Mr. Berington to throw discredit upon this letter is one of the most lamentable and unsuccessful efforts which strong prejudice has ever made to pervert the course of history. It is utterly baseless, and every assertion by which it is supported, is found, upon examining the historians to whom that author refers, to be borne out in no degree by the real sense of the words that they used. Irritated by the violence and intemperance of Becket, it is very probable that the Bishop of London did give the very harshest form to his accusations: and we do know, from the friends of Becket himself, that when sent by Henry to the Pope, the Bishop of London commenced a series of charges against the Primate, of so terrible a character, that the Pope stopped him, and would not suffer him to proceed.

Farther, I have only to state my own thorough conviction, that the letter is the genuine composition of Foliot, Bishop of London, that it was sent to Becket, and that Becket transmitted a copy of it to the Pope. My reasons for believing such to be the case, are these:

In the first place, the manuscript in which it is found is very ancient, probably the most ancient copy of Becket's letters extant; the hand-

sought him out and besought him on their knees, and with tears, to yield to the will of the king, and to receive the laws in dispute. .

writing leaves no doubt whatever of its antiquity. It forms then a part of one of the very earliest copies of Becket's correspondence.

In the next place, by a careful comparison of that letter with other letters of the Bishop of London, such as that to the Pope, I find a precise similarity of style, the same sort of figures of speech, similes of exactly the same character with each other, and especially a frequent reference to the likeness between the head of the Church and the head of the human body, and to the effects produced upon the limbs in the one instance, and the inferior members of the Church in the other, when anything affects the head. Besides this, as I have said, the concurrent testimony of three contemporary writers sustains the truth of every important point mentioned in this letter ; and in the next place when I am told that it is a forgery, I ask myself ; first, why such a forgery should be committed ? secondly, could it be committed, and remain undetected so long ? In regard to the first question, I am answered, It was forged by some enemy of Becket to do his reputation an injury. It was forged, then, during the life of Becket. It must have been circulated very generally to do him an injury, or else it lost its effect. Did Becket himself, then, never hear of it ? Did none of Becket's friends never hear of it ? Did the Bishop of London never hear of it ? Did the Pope never hear of it ? And if so, why did not the one party expose, if they could, the falsehood of the facts ; and why did not the other expose the shameful forgery of his name ? Why, at some period, did not Alexander himself, or the subsequent Popes, or any of the papal scribes, publicly declare this charge against one of their great saints and martyrs, to be a notorious forgery ? Why did they not call upon the Bishop of London to declare it to be such ? It could not well have escaped the observation of the Bishop of London himself ; for that bishop survived many years the contest between Becket and the king, and lived to see his opponent canonized. Why then did not he disown it ? It did not escape the knowledge of the Pope, as I shall show hereafter.

But if the letter, on the contrary, were really written, and sent, and contained the truth, there was every reason on earth why Becket and his friends should pass it over in silence, should affect very likely not to have received it ; and, moreover, there is every reason why the Bishop of London himself should not urge the subject home upon one, who, very soon after that letter was written, being supported by the Pope,

Some persons have asserted that the laws were not collected and written down till after the consent of the bishops

and armed with all the thunders of the Church, returned to England but to become a martyr, and to be canonized as a saint. In regard to the Popes, it was very wise of them to say nothing of the document, so long as the Bishop of London lived, and to suppress it as far as possible when he was dead. That he could not, and would not, deny that he had written it, they knew ; and therefore let it slumber during his life ; but by suppressing it, by banishing it from all the manuscripts of the Vatican, they judged, and judged rightly, that at some future period a document so condemnatory of their saint would either never be heard of, or would pass for a forgery. Unfortunately for this purpose, however, when they suppressed the letter in the manuscript, they forgot to erase the title from the catalogue ; and the first line of Foliot's letter—of Foliot's genuine, indubitable letter to Becket—is to be found at full amongst the Vatican catalogues !! This would seem to be the only link wanting in the chain of evidence, to prove that the letter was written by Foliot, was sent, and was received.

After this, I have not the slightest hesitation in receiving the letter (*Claudius*, b. II., folio 92.) as the genuine letter of the Bishop of London, and asserting that it is so beyond all reasonable doubt. Neither do I scruple to affirm, that it conveys the most important account of Becket's conduct that the world has ever received ; inasmuch as it is shown to be fully worthy of credit, by those contemporary historians who were not the professed advocates of the Primate. Neither did Lord Lyttleton, nor will I assert, that Foliot's evidence was to be received in opposition to any impartial testimony, for he was himself an opponent of Becket. But as the Pope himself bears witness to his integrity, as the Primate before their quarrel gave the same testimony, as all the Bishops of England were there to refute his statement if it was not true, I must contend that Lord Lyttleton was justified in receiving the authority of Foliot, as more worthy of credit than the accounts of the panegyrists and miracle-mongers in the Primate's train. All the impartial historians of the time confirm the bishop's account in its chief particulars ; and there are none directly opposed to it, but those whose business was to raise the character of Becket, at the expense of every other consideration.

It may be asked, and I would wish to meet the objection at once, upon what principles I admit, a little farther on, that a papal bull to the Archbishop of York may very probably be forged. It is contained in the

had been given : but this can scarcely be supposed to have been the case, and at all events, the question was, simply, whether the old laws of the realm were to be maintained or not ; the fact of their being the old laws and not new ones, being ascertained by reference to the memory of the eldest persons present. However that may be, Becket refused to put his seal to the laws that were then promulgated, although all the other bishops were induced to do so ; and it would seem that he affected to abstain from the service of the altar, until he obtained absolution from the Pope, for the wrong he had committed in consenting to the constitutions of Clarendon. At the same time, however, he joined with various other prelates in beseeching the Roman Pontiff to confirm the ancient customs of the realm, although there cannot be the slightest doubt that he well

same collection of manuscripts, and is certainly of equal antiquity with the letter which I have proved to be genuine. Nevertheless, I say it probably may have been forged ; though let it be remarked that I do not say positively it is a forgery—of that I am doubtful ; but there was a great object for forging such a document ; the great object of inducing the Archbishop of York, and the other bishops, to perform, and to be present at the coronation of the younger Henry. Here is a reasonable motive to be found for such a forgery ; and it appears to have been pronounced spurious by Alexander at once. It is scarcely possible to believe that, if the Pope had really given that bull, and then punished the bishops for acting upon it, they would not have brought it forward in their own defence, had they not also been convinced very soon that it was not a genuine document. The double-dealing of the Pope, indeed, between Henry and Becket, is sufficiently proved by the letter which I have given in another place, the authenticity of which is universally admitted ; but it is scarcely possible to conceive, that any man would have the impudence to give two bulls directly opposite to each other within the space of a few weeks, and to punish those who acted upon the first. Besides, this has none of those collateral evidences of authenticity which place the genuineness of Foliot's letter beyond all doubt. No contemporary historians declare that the Pope really did permit the coronation by the Archbishop of York ; neither does the title of the bull appear in the Vatican catalogues.

knew the request would be at once refused. The petition was of course rejected by the ambitious priest who owed his seat in the chair of St. Peter to the favour of the King of England.

The constitutions of Clarendon—the separate articles of which would occupy too much space for consideration in this place—being thus agreed to by the bishops, and disallowed by the Pope, Henry's next object was to deprive Becket,—of whose character he had now become fully aware, and whom he hated with a degree of virulence which could only arise from mortified vanity added to disappointed affection—of a great portion of the authority which he possessed, by obtaining for the Archbishop of York, whom, it would seem, he had entirely gained, the legatine power over all England. His application on this point Alexander could not well refuse, after all the mighty obligations which he owed to Henry; but the politic Pontiff qualified the concession in such a manner as to render it altogether impotent. He granted to Henry the legatine powers, to be delivered by him to the Archbishop of York whenever he should think fit; but with the condition that they should not be bestowed without the knowledge and consent of Becket. The latter prelate, however, became alarmed, notwithstanding the stipulation which the Pope had made, and he obtained from Alexander a promise to exempt his person, and the church and city of Canterbury, from the legatine power of the Archbishop of York. But Henry never made use of the commission entrusted to him, seeing that it would be useless in consequence of the condition with which it was clogged. His indignation towards Becket was not by any means diminished by that prelate's forced consent to the constitutions of Clarendon, and he now determined not only to proceed against the Archbishop in another manner, but to use his whole power to punish and annoy him. To this undertaking he was greatly stimu-

lated, there can be no doubt, both by the animosity which the barons entertained towards Becket, and by the daring attempts of that prelate himself to impede the execution of the laws which he had just sworn to observe.

Knowing the enmity with which he was regarded by the king and the nobles, and fearing, not unreasonably perhaps, for his life, Becket endeavoured to make his escape from England without the king's consent, which act was in itself, as he well knew, contrary to the law of the land. He was driven back, however, by contrary winds, and returned to Canterbury just in time to prevent his temporalities from being seized by the king's officers. It does not appear that Henry proceeded any further against him for the attempt to quit the kingdom : but he had at this time another accusation to bring against the archbishop, of a more odious nature ; namely, the having refused justice in his court to an English nobleman, whom we find named John the Marshal ; and in order to try this cause, Henry called a great Council at Northampton, to which Becket was formally cited. It would seem that the king had previously called upon him to present himself before him on a day fixed, but that Becket had refused to come, some say without any excuse, while others declare that the king had taken possession of his lodging, and put horses and men therein, upon which the archbishop had refused to appear till the king's servants and horses were removed.

To Northampton, however, Becket came ; and the monarch there laid his formal complaint against him for having refused justice to John the Marshal, though all the proper forms had been gone through for obtaining redress, and for contempt of his court in not appearing at the royal summons. In regard to John the Marshal, Becket pleaded that instead of swearing before him upon the Evangelists, according to the law of the land, that nobleman had brought in a book of psalms or canticles, and sworn thereon ; but the archbishop

himself declared, that he knew not by whose advice John the Marshal had done this ; and he only alleged that the oath taken on this psalter was that which it was requisite to take as a mere form before the cause could be removed from his court to that of the king. Henry, however, would not suffer this plea to prevail, as the gravamen of the charge was that he had not obeyed the king's first citation ; and on this point the court adjudged the archbishop to lie at the *mercy*, at it was called, of the monarch, who agreed to accept five hundred pounds, which Becket offered to give, at the prayers,* and by the advice of the barons. This was an enormous sum in those times, amounting to several thousand pounds of our present money ; and Becket not having come prepared to pay it, found sureties amongst the bishops, with which the king was satisfied. But Henry had evidently arranged beforehand a cruel plan for persecuting the archbishop, and reducing him to resign his dignity ; and the moment that this question was settled, he made another demand upon Becket, alleging that he had lent him five hundred pounds in the wars of Toulouse. Becket acknowledged having received the money, but declared that it was a gift, and not a loan. Henry maintained that it was merely a loan ; and the parliament, having to judge whose assertion was most worthy of credit, took, as a matter of course, the word of the prosecutor, the defendant acknowledging that

* The words of Hoveden, whom Lord Lyttleton cites, are as follows : "Tamen precē et consilio baronum posuit se in misericordiā regis de quingentis libris." Lord Lyttleton says : "And it being understood that a fine of five hundred pounds would be accepted by Henry, Becket submitted to pay that sum." This does not seem to me to give sufficient weight to the words of Hoveden, who certainly meant to imply that Becket only yielded to pay it at the earnest entreaty of the barons. Let it be here remarked that Hoveden asserts that the first demand made by Becket on his arrival at Northampton, was for permission to go to France, in order to confer with the Pope.

the money had been received, but being unable to show by evidence that it was a gift. Had Becket foreseen what was to follow, he would in all probability have pleaded in regard to this demand, as he afterwards did in reference to others, that the king's justiciary, acting in the monarch's name, and confirmed by the voice of Prince Henry, had at his consecration set him free from all secular engagements whatsoever. This immunity, however, did not seem to come to his recollection at the time ; he pleaded to the charge that the money was bestowed as a gift, and not being able to establish the fact, was condemned to pay the amount. Sureties for this second sum not being to be found amongst the bishops, some of his vassals pledged themselves for the payment, and were accepted.

All this, however, was but a prelude to the chief blow, which was intended to crush him. On the third day of the sitting of the parliament of Northampton, it was stated on the part of the king, that while Becket was chancellor of the kingdom, several abbacies and bishoprics had become vacant, and the incomes thereof, of right belonging to the king, had been left in the hands of his chancellor, together with various other small branches of revenue, whereof no account had been given for many years. The king alleged that there was a deficiency of forty-four thousand marks, and demanded that Becket should give an account of the sums he had received.

The prelate, as he well might be, was astonished and confounded. He replied, that this inquiry never having been mentioned to him before, he had not come prepared, even in thought, and he required time to consider, and draw up his reply. The request was one that could not, without the most flagrant injustice, be refused ; but Henry demanded sureties on this point also — a demand which might have appeared harsh, if not unjust, inasmuch as it could not be supposed that any body could be suddenly

found to be security for so enormous a sum, but that Becket had, unfortunately for himself, given a plea for such precaution, by attempting to flee from the land, without the king's knowledge or permission.

The Archbishop next requested to be allowed to confer with his brethren, the bishops ; and to this Henry acceded. The bishops, however, gave the primate but small comfort ; they all saw and knew that the king's determination was to crush him. He had disgusted them by his tergiversation, falsehood, and hypocrisy, very nearly as much as he had disgusted the lay peers by his pride, his covetousness, and his ambition. The Bishop of London, and almost all the other prelates, strongly advised him to cast himself at the king's feet, and to resign the archbishopric into his hands ; but the Bishop of Winchester, on the contrary, a man very similar in various points of character to himself, recalled to his mind that the king's Justiciary had in the most solemn matter set him free from all obligations to the court, and recommended him to plead that fact, and to deny the power of any one to call him in question after his consecration for anything that had taken place before. The opinion of the rest of the bishops was against the plan of Henry of Winchester, reasonable as it was ; and after some debate, and some silence, Becket sent for the Earls of Leicester and Cornwall, and begged them to inform the king that he would give his answer the next day, as God might direct him.

After a good deal of misunderstanding, in regard to the meaning of this somewhat ambiguous message, the king gave Becket until the next day to consider ; and the Primate, returning to his abode, found himself almost deserted by the immense train of knights and nobles who had accompanied him to Northampton.

Even this sign of fallen fortunes did not suffice to cast down his haughty and determined spirit. Resolved to imi-

tate with blasphemous minuteness the supper of the king described in a parable of our Saviour, he sent out, and filled his table with all the poor and the beggars that could be found in the neighbourhood of Northampton ; judging, shrewdly, that the only shield which could guard his head from the indignation he had called upon himself, was the affectation of superior sanctity. Nevertheless, the anxiety and perturbation of his spirit produced a fit of sickness, which reduced him to keep his bed ; and certainly a knowledge of the profuse and extravagant manner in which he had squandered the very sums he was now called upon to account for, was not calculated to restore him to health of body or peace of mind. Still the absolute impossibility of attending the court on the day appointed, gave him time to arrange his plans, and also afforded an opportunity of employing means to intimidate or to gain over a part of the many who were arrayed against him ; for although it was at first believed by every one, that his sickness was feigned, yet upon its being proved to be real, by the visit of two noblemen, the investigation was once more put off till the following day, when he promised to appear.

We are told that his resolution now wavered, and that at first, he proposed to proceed barefoot to the palace, to cast himself at the feet of the king, and to beseech him, in memory of their old friendship, to consent to a reconciliation. There can scarcely be a doubt that this plan would have proved successful. Henry, though passionate to a degree of insanity, was by no means tenacious of his anger : having humbled the Archbishop so far as to prevent him from becoming dangerous for the future, he might have been contented with his submission, and moreover the king might then perhaps have recollect ed, what he should have recollect ed long before ; that Becket had expended enormous sums in his service ; that he had obtained for him peace, and great extension of territories ; that he had cap-

tured towns and fortresses, judged impregnable, for his benefit and for his interest ; that he had marched to his assistance in Normandy with twelve hundred knights and four thousand men-at-arms, all of whom were paid by himself, and maintained at his expense.

On the other hand, however, it is not impossible, that the very consciousness of such services rendered, acting upon a proud and self-confident spirit, might tend, in combination with ambitious feelings, to make Becket resolve upon resistance to one whom he considered an ungrateful master. Certain it is, that after brief reflection he laid out his plan with that mixture of hypocritical cunning and ambitious daring, which had distinguished his opposition to the constitutions of Clarendon. He determined to effect a belief that his life was in danger, to baffle Henry's artifices by bringing forward boldly the real cause of the king's indignation against him, rather than the matter immediately under discussion, to overwhelm all considerations of the account required of his stewardship in the question of his opposition to the constitutions of Clarendon, and to resume the high ground of a defender of the clergy's privileges, rather than to remain in the low position in which the king had placed him, as an insolvent, nay, a fraudulent debtor. In accordance with this view, when a number of the bishops visited his sick chamber, he reproached them bitterly for having abandoned his cause. He told them that he appealed from them to the Pope, he commanded them on their duty to him and to the Church to abstain from taking any part in the proceedings against him, he threatened them with all the papal thunders if they did not obey, and he directed them to launch an anathema at the head of any one who should dare to employ the secular power in his case.

The bishops were legally bound to take part in the proceedings of the parliament ; and Becket now openly re-

fusing to submit to the highest tribunal of the land, in reality committed a breach of his oath of fealty, and brought himself under the law of high treason, as it then stood. Still his menaces and exhortations were not without their effect upon the bishops, the more perhaps from the very aggravated nature of his offence, which rendered him obnoxious to very severe punishment.

Becket, having now chosen his part, proceeded to enact it, in a manner the most offensive and the most criminal. Affecting to believe that in presenting himself before a high court of parliament, where all the lay peers and a great body of the clergy were assembled, he was absolutely going to martyrdom, he prepared himself for it in an ostentatious manner, celebrating the mass appointed for Saint Stephen's day at an altar dedicated to the first martyr, and carrying a consecrated wafer upon his person. He proceeded with such demonstrations of alarm to the great council chamber, at the door of which he took the archiepiscopal cross from the hands of the cross-bearer, and carrying it himself, entered alone into the hall.

The king having notice of his coming, and of the extraordinary and indecent manner in which he came, and probably having heard also that he had that morning caused to be sung "The princes sat and spoke against me, and the wicked persecuted me," together with the psalm, "The rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed," retired from the hall on the approach of the man who had thus insulted him, and gave way, it would seem, in an inner chamber, to one of the wild and extravagant fits of fury which so frequently disgraced him.

In the meanwhile, the bishops arose at the approach of Becket; but, astonished at his appearance in parliament waving his silver cross in his hand, the Bishop of Hereford, as his chaplain, advanced and offered to relieve him of the crosier. But this Becket would by no means per-

mit, asserting boldly, that he required it for his defence, and to show under the banner of what prince he fought. The Archbishop of York, however, reproved him severely for presenting himself in a manner so insulting to every one there, and more especially to the king ; and the Bishops of London and Hereford still strove, somewhat violently, to take the cross from him. The commotion lasted some time ; and it would seem that the Archbishop of York was neither very temperate nor considerate in his words, telling the primate that the sword of the king would be found sharper than the staff with which he came armed. Becket replied with great readiness, “ If the weapon of the king carnally can slay the body, my sword can spiritually cut through the soul, and cast it into hell ; ” and still refusing to give up the cross, he sat down and waited the result, taking care, however, to announce to all the prelates present, that he appealed his cause to the Pope, and strictly forbade them to take part in any proceedings against him.*

In the meanwhile, Henry, after giving way to the first burst of his fury, sent a herald to require the presence of all the peers, both lay and spiritual, who had remained in the first hall, and complaining with much indignation of the insult that had been offered to him and them, demanded their opinion as to the further proceedings against Becket. It would appear that the reply generally made by the assembly was, that on account of his present conduct and breach of his oath of fealty, the primate should be impeached for high treason.

The king, however, did not suffer them to pursue this

* Hoveden says, that before he thus publicly notified to the bishops his appeal, information had been secretly given to him that his death was resolved upon ; and the same writer declares, moreover, that it was at this time that the bishops eagerly pressed him to resign his archbishopric into the hands of the king.

course ; but sent out in the first place, to demand of Becket, whether he would give a full account of the revenues received during his chancellorship. To this message, Becket replied that he had often given to the king an account of all these things before he was archbishop, and that at his election, Henry, the king's son, then custos of the realm, with all the barons of the exchequer, and Richard de Lucy, Justiciary of England, declared him free to God and to holy church, from all receipts and computations, and from every secular exaction on the part of the lord king. Farther, he refused to plead.

The king, on this answer being brought to him, demanded that instant justice should be done on Becket, his liegeman, who refused to recognize the authority of his court. The bishops, however, moved by the menaces which Becket had addressed to them in the morning, besought the king's permission to absent themselves from the judgment against the primate, on the condition of their appealing in their clerical capacity to the pope against him, and soliciting his deposition. Although they were bound by the laws of the land, and by the various feudal estates which they held, to attend the judgment of the king's court, Henry weakly gave way to their request ; and they went out to announce to Becket their solemn appeal to the supreme pontiff.

The laudatory historians of Becket declare that the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of Exeter preceeded the other prelates in their retreat from the hall, the one telling his clerks to follow, that they might not see the effusion of blood, and the other informing Becket that the king had threatened to put the first man to death who should speak in his favour. But this statement is quite contrary to more impartial and reasonable accounts. There could not be the slightest fear of effusion of blood in the king's presence ; such a thing had never taken place even in the most turbulent times of Stephen, or during the tyrannical reign of Rufus.

All that the king demanded was, that the archbishop should give an account of certain sums received, or be tried for contumacy in refusing it ; and these tales of his personal danger at this time were evidently manufactured afterwards to give an excuse for Becket's conduct. At length the great body of the bishops appeared, and the Bishop of Chichester, acting as speaker for the rest, thus addressed the Archbishop.

“ You were formerly our primate, and we were bound to obey you ; but because you have taken the oath of fealty to our lord the king, that is to say, an oath to preserve, in the utmost in your power, his life, limbs and royal dignity, and to keep his statutes, which he requires to be maintained, and because you do now nevertheless endeavour to destroy them, especially those which immediately concern his dignity and honour, we therefore declare you guilty of perjury, and henceforth own no obedience to a perjured archbishop, and putting ourselves and all that appertains to us under the protection of the pope, cite you to his presence, there to answer these charges.”

It would appear that this solemn condemnation of his conduct by his episcopal brethren took Becket by surprise, and for a moment overwhelmed him. His only reply was, “ I hear what you say,” and the bishops seating themselves on the other side of the hall, the whole body remained in expectant silence for the result of those proceedings which they knew were taking place within. In a few minutes, the doors opened again, and the Earls of Cornwall and Leicester appearing, addressed the primate, once more commanding him to come before the king, and ending, “ Or otherwise* hear your sentence.”

* I have combined the account of Hoveden with that of other writers, thinking it probable that the king did send a summons to Becket from the inner chamber, where he himself was sitting, to the hall in which the archbishop had remained, before he called upon the peers to pronounce any judgment at all. That the summons was repeated by the

Here Becket interrupted the speaker, having recovered his presence of mind, and prepared himself to act vigorously.

“ My sentence ! ” he exclaimed, starting up. “ Nay, my son, the earl, first hear you me ! You well know how faithfully I have served the king in the matters of this world, on account of which he was pleased to raise me to the archbishopric of Canterbury—God knows much against my will ! ” He then went on to repeat what he had said regarding the declaration of the Justiciary and Prince Henry at his consecration, and ended by the following extraordinary declaration : “ Attend, my son, to what I say. Inasmuch as the soul is more worthy than the body, so are you more strictly bound to obey God and me, than any earthly king. Neither does justice or reason permit children to judge and condemn their fathers ; therefore I do not own the judgment of the king, of yourself, or of all the other peers of the realm, being only to be judged, under God, by our lord the pope. To him, before you all, I here appeal, leaving the church of Canterbury, my order, dignity, and all things appertaining to it, to his protection, and to God’s. Moreover, I cite you, my brethren, the bishops, because you obey man rather than God, to the presence and judgment of the supreme pontiff ; and relying upon the authority of the church and the Holy See, I depart from this place.”

Thus saying, he rose to go forth ; and the hall being filled with a vast number of Henry’s nobles, as well as with many of the inferior clergy, a great noise was made, and the archbishop was assailed with gross and threatening lan-

Earl of Leicester before he proceeded to announce the sentence after it was given, is proved by the concurrent testimony of many. It will be seen, however, that I have rejected almost entirely the authority of Fitz-stephen, whose testimony, if he had been unbiassed, would have been invaluable, but whose determination to elevate Becket in the eyes of his readers, often reaches the burlesque.

guage. Some called him perjured traitor, and some offered him other insulting names, which roused the proud and irritable spirit within him ; and turning round, he reviled his enemies in turn with the foulest and most disgraceful language. He declared, in the first place, that if his ecclesiastical station did not prohibit it, he would repel the charge in arms ; and then singling out two of the most conspicuous of his adversaries, he accused the one of having had a relation who was hanged, and calling the other a bastard, accused him of a monstrous and horrible offence.

In this manner the future saint made his way out of the hall, amidst evident marks of hatred and derision on the part of those within it. On coming to the outer gates, however, he found them locked and the porter absent, and it is probable, as the judgment of the court was, that he should be taken and imprisoned, he would have been arrested in this situation, had not one of his attendants observed the keys hanging near, and given him egress. The mob which was round the door, and which consisted principally, it would seem, of the very lowest classes, with a few of the inferior clergy, received him with shouts and congratulations, and thus conducted him home ; and the king, to whom his conduct was represented with much anger by the barons, became alarmed lest the nobles should carry their indignation to too great a length, and published a proclamation forbidding all persons on pain of death to do any injury to the primate or his retainers.

This was a very wise and prudent measure, for it deprived Becket of any real cause for apprehension. That prelate, however, as I have shown, had applied previously to the trial, for permission to leave the kingdom, and he now renewed his application through the Bishops of Hereford and Worcester. The king replied, that he would consider of his request till the following day ; but it is probable, Becket knowing that his sentence was pronounced

imagined that Henry sought for a favourable opportunity of securing his person, which would have been utter ruin to all his hopes, and he therefore determined to fly immediately. It is true that none of his biographers have assigned such a reason for his flight, seeking to make us believe that his life was in danger. Every thing, however, shows that the sentence of parliament was pronounced, and Hoveden declares that sentence to have been incarceration, which to Becket perhaps would have been worse than death: so that we may well suppose his purpose was to avoid such a fate, although he himself affected to apprehend a violent death, and his partizans have taken care to assert that such a fate was likely to befall him. Being at the time within the walls of a religious house—that of the regular Canons of Northampton—he dared not assume that the king would attempt to arrest him there; but affecting to fear the remorseless arm of assassination, he caused his bed to be removed into the church, and placed between two altars, covering by these outward shows his real intentions, as he did by the assumption of zeal for the church his views of personal ambition. He supped, however, and went through all the usual forms of clerical life, as if about to retire to rest; but as soon as every thing was still, he quitted the convent by a back-door accompanied by two monks, with whose aid he got out of the town of Northampton, by the only gate which was left open and unguarded.* Taking such a course as was most likely to deceive his pursuers, he fled to Lincoln, and thence, disguised and suffering great inconveniences, he made his way to Sandwich, and a boat being procured with some difficulty, he was conveyed to the coast of Flanders.

* The fact of the gate being open and unguarded, is taken from Hoveden, though Herbert de Boseham, one of the writers combined in the Historia Quadripartita, who accompanied Becket in his flight, does not mention by what means they got out of the city.

The sovereign of that country was bound by so many ties to Henry, that Becket dared not cast off his disguise ; and consequently in the dress of a monk, he entered the town of Gravelines on foot, and took up his abode for the night at an inn. The report of all that occurred in England, however, had already reached Flanders, and Becket soon perceived that the landlord and his wife both served him with greater demonstrations of respect than were likely to be shown to a poor travelling monk in a common inn. In order therefore to do away any suspicions which might be entertained regarding his real name and character, he treated the host familiarly, and bade him sit down to table with him ; but the good man, whose penetration was not to be baffled, sat himself down at Becket's feet, saying, "I thank God, my lord, that I have been thought worthy to receive you under my roof."

The prelate, judging wisely that any further attempt to deceive his host might show a want of confidence which would be dangerous, acknowledged his station, and was not betrayed. He succeeded in making his way into France, through various perils and difficulties, and was received with joy and distinction by Louis, although Henry, to whom that monarch was under such vast obligations, had sent ambassadors to him to notify the flight of the archbishop, and to require that he might not be harboured and protected in the French territory. Those ambassadors met with nothing from Louis but coldness, and we may say insult, for the comments which he thought fit to make upon Henry's conduct amounted to no less than insult to an independent sovereign.

Becket then joined Alexander at Sens, where he was also welcomed with much satisfaction by the Pope. There his conduct was applauded, the constitutions of Clarendon publicly examined, ten out of the sixteen heads thereof condemned, and Henry's ambassadors were treated with harsh-

ness, severity and reproof, by the pontiff who owed his station more to the English monarch than to any other man on earth. All that the king required was, that the archbishop should be sent back again to England, accompanied by legates empowered to judge between him and Henry without appeal. This Alexander positively refused, upon a plea not the most creditable to his court. He was afraid, we are told, that the legates might be either convinced by Henry's eloquence, overawed by his power, or bribed by his money.* The latter, indeed, was not improbable, if the accounts given by some of Becket's own friends, regarding the integrity of Alexander's papal court, may be relied on. Whatever might be his motives, the ambassadors retired from Sens, angry and disappointed, and marked their indignation by not demanding the blessing of the supreme pontiff.

Such was the beginning and progress of that lamentable dispute, which terminated in the murder of an archbishop in his cathedral church, and in the abasement of an English monarch before the pontiff of Rome. If we regard impartially the conduct of Becket and Henry, both in the commencement and the prosecution of this unhappy affair, we shall find, that though there be some excuses for each, both deserve great censure, though certainly not in an equal degree. That Becket's opposition to the statutes of Clarendon constituted a conspiracy with a foreign power against the laws of the land, and contrary to his allegiance, thereby amounting absolutely and distinctly to high treason, no unprejudiced person at all acquainted with the codes of those times can at all doubt. The case was one of resist-

* The words employed by the historian are:—*Sed dominus Papa nullum cardinalem, nec aliquem legatum mittere voluit: sciens quod rex Anglia potens erat in opere et sermone, et quod legati ex facili possent corrumphi, utpote qui plus surum, et argentum sitiunt, quam justitiam et aequitatem.*

ance, not to any arbitrary decision of the king, but both to the received and customary laws of the land, and to the same laws collected into statutes and sanctioned by the great council of the nation assembled in parliament. Such then, was the head and front of Becket's offence ; and in pursuing his object, he was guilty, beyond all doubt, of repeated perjury, of gross hypocrisy, and of a frequent violation of the laws of the land. It was not indeed that he wished to secure to the clergy a monopoly of rape, murder and robbery ; but it was, that he sought to abstract them altogether from the secular power, in consonance with the universal efforts of the church of Rome, to establish an empire of its own within all other empires, and render all the crowns of earth, by one vast system of superstitious privileges, tributary and subservient to the tiara. In following this object, there may be a question, whether Becket was influenced merely by the spirit of his order and the peculiar character of his age,* which might lead him to strive in every way for the promotion of the power of the clergy, or whether he was actuated by personal ambition, which could only be fully gratified, after his elevation to the see of Canterbury, by extorting such privileges in favour of the priesthood, as might serve him for steps to rise above the sovereign who had raised him, and either make him totally independent in England, or perhaps, enable him to obtain the supreme rule of all, and seat himself ultimately on the papal throne. Either supposition is quite sufficient to account for the primate's conduct ; and perhaps both motives concurred, for Becket could scarcely have entered

* This epoch may be considered as one of the great days of battle between the power of the Roman see and its opponents, of which any one may convince themselves by examining the struggle which took place a little before this period between the Popes and Frederic Barbarossa, and that which followed shortly after between Philip Augustus and the Roman pontiffs.

so fully into the encroaching views of the see of Rome in that age without having felt the spirit ; and yet every step of his course is so marked by personal ambition, that it is impossible to doubt the design of self-aggrandisement had its share also in all his proceedings.

Henry, on his part, had a great advantage over Becket, namely, that his object was just, reasonable, and worthy of every effort ; but, on the other hand, he was embarrassed by this disadvantage, that though supported by his own people, and by the peculiar institutions of his kingdom, he was opposed by the general ignorance and superstition of the age. It was in the means he employed to attain his object that he erred, carried away by the peculiar weakness and impetuosity of his own character. His vanity had been hurt by his being over-reached by Becket, his indiguation had been excited by that prelate's ingratitude and insolence, and he therefore suffered a great contest for principles to be affected by selfish animosity, and deviate into a personal quarrel. Becket made his great stand upon principles ; and he very well knew, that however unjust those principles might be, the whole army of monks and priests, who were interested in their maintenance, would support him as their general and their leader. Henry's first error was the forcible* intrusion of Becket into the see of Canter-

* How comes it that Doctor Lingard, in his laborious defence of Becket—for the part of his history of England which touches on this subject can only be considered as such—how comes it that he entirely overlooks the testimony of Alanus in the Historia Quadripartita, and affirms that the primate's reply to the bishop of London in regard to the regularity and propriety of his election “is *satisfactory?*” See *Lingard*, vol. 2, page 205. Becket's reply might be looked upon as satisfactory, if a person who was with Becket when he joined the Pope at Sens, did not tell us, even in the midst of his praises of that prelate, that Becket had himself acknowledged to the Pope, “I went up into the fold of Christ, not by the true door, not having been called to it by a canonical election, but obtruded into it by the secular power.” Becket's answer is not satisfac-

bury ; for though the favourite had always been subservient to him as long as the objects of ambition were in his hand, the king should have known very well that by the prelate's elevation he opened a new path before him, leading in a direction immediately opposite to that in which his own views were turned.

All these were errors committed by Henry ; but he also committed wrongs, and the just repression and correction of the archbishop's resistance to the constitutions of Clarendon soon deviated into persecution of the man : the punishment of a prelate's tergiversation and perjury was lost sight of in the assumed peculations or defalcations of a chancellor, and the king entered into the arena with a subject, in the character of a rapacious, if not an unjust, creditor. At the same time the lamentable and disgraceful display of passion, to which he occasionally gave way, mingled scorn with the opposition of his enemies ; his furious gestures, flashing eyes, and indecent words, showed how much personal hatred shared in his proceedings against the archbishop ; and the looks, tones, and language of the King of England became matter for reprehension and comment through half the refectories in Europe. Besides all this, if we may credit the testimony of the best writers of that day, Henry was most unjust as well as unwise. Whether Becket did really owe him the sums that were demanded, must ever remain uncertain ; but there can be no earthly doubt—for Henry and his ministers never denied it—that the king's son and his justiciary both declared Becket free from all obligations to the court, at the time

tory ; it is the answer of a man defending himself as best he may before the eyes of the world, whereas his acknowledgment to the Pope was made in a very different and more private manner, and was never, in all probability, intended to be published, but that the indiscretion of one of his friends luckily gave to the world what ought not to be suppressed.

of his consecration ; and Hoveden, who would not have dared to say such a thing had it not been true, asserts that the barons of the exchequer joined in the proceeding.*

The only objection urged on the part of Henry is, that Becket could not prove the King had given authority to his Justiciary to do that act ; but this was surely a pitiful evasion. Prince Henry was undoubtedly present at the consecration as Custos of the kingdom. The Justiciary was there with full and extraordinary powers from the King in regard to the election—powers even sufficient to threaten the Bishops with proscription and exile if they did not elect the Chancellor. The Barons of the Exchequer were there consenting ; and it must be remembered that those officers possessed at that time much more important functions than they do at present. All this would seem to prove that the emancipation of Becket on his election from all pecuniary obligations to the Court was full and sufficient, though Becket should undoubtedly have pleaded it in a more orderly and formal manner. At the same time it must be remembered that more than two years had elapsed since his election and yet the King had urged no such claim

* It is my firm conviction that the five hundred pounds, or five hundred marks as some call it, which Henry demanded of Becket as a debt, had been *given* to the prelate, and not *lent* ; and in regard to the claim of exemption made by Becket, I see no reason whatsoever why we should not take the words of Hoveden in favour of the primate, as well as against him. He especially names the barons of the Exchequer ; and in speaking of the Prince Henry, he says, “Cui regnum adjuratum fuit,” which I conceive can only be translated, that he was Custos of the realm during his father’s absence. This office was very often bestowed upon mere children, as was the case with Edward, the son of Edward the Third. They acted with a council, such as the barons of the Exchequer could very well represent in the present instance ; and I do not know that the legality of any public act performed by the custos and council, was ever called in question, unless there were other circumstances to vitiate it besides the want of the king’s express orders.

during that period ; and there is also much reason to believe that Richard de Lucy, who alone could have proved the orders which Henry had given him, was sent out of England into Flanders about the time of the Parliament of Northampton. It is certain that he was in Flanders before the end of the year 1164, the Parliament of Northampton having taken place in the month of November of that year. This is a very suspicious circumstance ; especially as we find the Earl of Leicester acting the part of Justiciary at Northampton. At all events it is evident that Henry brought against the Primate very doubtful charges of a personal character when he had the fairest opportunity of urging against him other offences of a grave nature, by the proof and punishment of which the great principles for which the King struggled would have been fully established.

Such was the state of the contest between Becket and Henry, in the early part of 1165 ; but the King of France, besides his support of the fugitive Primate, had committed another offence against the monarch to whom he owed so much, by bestowing upon the Count of Blois, who had married his daughter, the office of Seneschal of France, an office which was hereditary in the house of Anjou, and which Henry himself had exercised in the disputes regarding Brittany. The anger of the King of England was so much excited by these acts, and the language that he used on the subject was so vehement, that his mother Matilda, seeing nothing but the prospect of a sanguinary war between her son and Louis, besought the Pope, it appears, to interfere in order to preserve peace. Alexander undertook with some success the office of mediator, though it is clearly proved that Henry at this time proposed to withdraw his support from that Pontiff and his alliance from France, and to unite with Frederick Barbarossa for the purpose of raising a new Pope to the chair of Saint Peter, Victor having died in the year 1164.

Henry having gone over into France, a meeting took place between him and Louis, at the town of Gisors, in Easter, 1165. This conference left matters much as they were before. War was indeed averted for the time, but that result was produced more probably by the terrible ravages which were committed on the English possessions by the Welsh, than by any satisfaction which Henry received from Louis, who declined to abandon the cause of Becket, and delayed restoring to Henry his due hereditary right of Seneschal of France. The insurrection of Wales had taken place before the meeting of the parliament of Northampton, and troops for suppressing it had been raised by that assembly ; but the flight of Becket and the events which followed, had interrupted the king's proceedings, and called him into France, while Rees ap Gryffyth, at the head of the revolt, was gaining strength hourly ; and the other Welsh Princes, believing Henry to be inextricably entangled in a contest with the Church, and perhaps in a war with France, appeared day by day more boldly in the ranks of the insurgents, and asserted more loudly their national independence.

These embarrassing circumstances might induce Henry to temporize with the French king ; and as soon as the conference at Gisors was over, and the province of Normandy secured as far as possible, Henry returned to England, leaving his wife Eleanor to command in Aquitaine and Maine during his absence. As speedily as possible the king hastened towards the scene of strife, and increasing as far as he could the numbers of the force which had been collected at Northampton, he marched on into Wales, and directed his arms against Flintshire. His first expedition would appear to have been but little successful, the enemy having retired before him into the vale of Cluyd ; but he had now acquired a sufficient knowledge of the extent of the insurrection to perceive that the forces at his command

were by no means sufficient, and he returned into England in order to raise a more imposing army. Levies were made in his continental dominions as well as in England ; and at length he took the field, and marched to Oswestry with a body of troops, the numbers of which we do not exactly know, but to describe which, the greater part of the annalists of the time employ all the most high sounding words at their command. The Chronicle of Mailros, using more moderate terms, merely calls it a great army ; but we know that it was by far more numerous than any that had ever been led into Wales. The Welsh Princes, not intimidated, however, prepared to meet the English monarch, with a force scarcely less in number than his own. Almost all the Princes of North and South Wales and Powis-land, were now collected, determined to struggle with desperation, as they fought without any hope of mercy from their enemy. The strength of the country, their knowledge of all the advantageous points, and the fitness of the ground for their peculiar mode of warfare, were greatly in favour of the Welsh ; but they were inferior in arms, in skill, and in discipline, to the English and Normans, and they remained wisely in their mountains, without venturing to dispute with Henry the more open parts of the land.

That prince, warned by what had taken place on a former occasion, did not advance so rashly as before, but ordered the woods to be cut down as he marched on, to guard against surprise by the enemy. The pioneers on whom this duty fell were supported by the advanced guards of Henry's army, in which were all the picked troops of England and Normandy. Some of the Welsh, however, ventured to attack this force, we are assured without orders from their superiors ; a general battle ensued upon the banks of the river up which Henry was advancing, and though the inhabitants of Wales fought with desperate valour, and left a number of dead upon the field, the English

king slowly forced his way forward till the pass was gained, and the Welsh retreating took up a position at the top of a high mountain, while the English army encamped at its foot. Scarcity of provisions, however, the sudden swelling of the rivers, and violent rains, forced Henry to decamp in some confusion, and with the loss of his baggage ; but the Welsh did not venture to take advantage of his retreat, and he reached the city of Chester in safety.

Anger and mortification now induced the king to commit an act disgraceful to his character as a man and a Christian, and opposed to his general policy, which was mild and humane. His grandfather, Henry the First, had committed some acts of shocking barbarity ; and hostages and prisoners were frequently treated ill, when those with whom they were connected either violated faith, or proved very difficult to subdue. But nothing of the kind had hitherto taken place in Henry's reign ; a milder spirit was growing up, and I am inclined to believe, from the manner in which the act is marked in all the Chronicles of the time, that the mutilation which Henry now inflicted upon the hostages which he had formerly received from the Welsh Princes, excited both surprise and horror throughout the country. These hostages were the children and near relations of the Princes of Wales : and he had the barbarity to put out the eyes of all the males, and to cut off the ears and noses of the females.* As may well be supposed, such an act but increased the hatred of the Welsh ; and not only gave matter of triumph to the king's enemies, but in some degree justified the belief which Becket seems to have entertained

* Lord Lyttleton, in one of the notes upon his work, seems to have entertained some doubt as to this cruelty being exercised upon the female hostages, from having found no other authority than Hoveden, who is not confirmed by Powell. But Hoveden is fully supported by the Chronicle of Mailros, at the year 1165, which would appear to have been very regularly and accurately kept by the Abbots of that Monastery.

himself, that to his councils and restraining influence was owing much of the wisdom and moderation of Henry's earlier years.

While this tragedy was in execution, Henry was busily making preparations for renewing that course of operations which had once before proved so successful against Wales. This was to proceed with a large force along the sea coast, supported and supplied by his navy ; but while the king was waiting for the arrival of a sufficient number of vessels to put this plan in execution, he suddenly, from some cause unknown, dismissed his fleet, broke up his camp, and retired from Chester with precipitation. This unaccountable proceeding was immediately taken advantage of by the Welsh Princes. Rushing forth from their strongholds, they poured into the country still possessed by the English ; the whole of Cardigan and the greater part of Pembrokeshire were subdued by Rees ap Gryffyth, while the castle of Basinwark, the great stronghold of the Norman power in that quarter, was captured by Owen Gwyneth. The friends of Henry mourned to see such a change come over his fortunes, and Becket rejoiced in the reverses of his master.

The conduct of Henry in this transaction was indeed unaccountable. It is true, that while he was thus busily engaged in Wales, the French king, though not actually attacking his Norman dominions, was exciting his subjects in Maine to revolt, and fomenting the troubles in Britanny, the malcontents of which duchy now leagued themselves with the rebels in Maine. But the peril was by no means so imminent as to call for the presence of the English king, to the detriment of his reputation, and to the danger of the counties bordering upon Wales ; and yet no more reasonable cause whatsoever has been assigned for his extraordinary abandonment of all his plans and purposes at that moment. Whether such was his motive or not, Henry did

not return to his continental dominions immediately after quitting Wales, but passed some time in England, occupied by various transactions, only one of which seems to have been of any very great importance. This was the reception of ambassadors from the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa, whose envoys acted also on the part of Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony. Both those princes having acknowledged Victor the anti-pope, were held by the English and French churches to be schismatics ; both were also already deeply engaged in the cause of Wido or Guido of Crema, a new rival to Alexander. Nevertheless, indignant at the support shown to Becket, and the ingratitude displayed towards himself, Henry received the ministers of Frederic Barbarossa with joy and satisfaction, entered into a strict alliance with the emperor, and contracted his eldest daughter Matilda, not yet ten years old, to the Duke of Saxony. At the head of the emperor's embassy was the Archbishop of Cologne, a prelate of great powers of mind and determination of character, who possessed vast influence with Frederic, and who had taken a very decided part in the schism which had desolated the church. With him Henry now contracted a great intimacy ; and notwithstanding the position in which he stood towards the Pontiff recognized by the Anglican church, he was received by the English king, by the bishops, and by the nobility of the realm, with distinction and honour, such as had never been shown to any ambassador before.

It is probable, by this conduct towards a prelate who had been excommunicated by Alexander, that Henry wished to give the Pope an intimation that he had not so far committed himself in his favour as not to abandon him, and join the party of his opponents, if he thought fit. Indeed, it would appear, that either by the persuasions of the emperor, or at the suggestion of some of his own counsellors, Henry was led to contemplate a complete rupture with Alexander,

and even went so far as to threaten that pontiff, in no very doubtful language, with the loss of British support. He wrote to the archbishop of Cologne too, after the ambassadors from Frederic had quitted England, to announce his determination of sending ambassadors to Alexander, with a demand that he and the cardinals should abandon their support of Becket, and recognize the ancient customs of the English realm, with the alternative of losing his assistance and support. He even went so far as to send the ambassadors named in this letter, who on their way to Italy, reached Wurtzburg, where they found a diet of the empire assembled, at which the emperor and all his princes formally recognized the anti-pope Pascal the third, swore never to obey Alexander, and bound the German empire to oppose that Pope and any other who at an after period might be elected by his party in the conclave. The emperor even asserted openly, that Henry had pledged himself by his ambassadors to abandon Alexander, and no longer to give him his countenance. Whether such was the fact or not, upon the angry remonstrances of Alexander, Henry only so far retreated from this promise, if it really was made, as to say, that he would always recognize and obey Alexander so long as he showed him fatherly affection, saving his own royal dignity and the rights of his kingdom. But Henry was not steady in his purposes—not sincere in his menace. Had he determined fully and firmly to persevere in the course which he pretended to have adopted, and to abandon Alexander in case of his attempting to maintain the unjust authority which he had usurped or support the ambitious pretensions of Becket, it might have been wise to make the threat, and to take such preparatory steps as those displayed in the negotiations with the emperor. Nor can it be doubted that the apprehension of such conduct, and of the utter destruction which was likely to ensue to him and his party in consequence of a strict alli-

ance between Henry, Frederic, and the Duke of Saxony, might have induced Alexander to abandon the cause of Becket, and to desist from his opposition to the English customs. But there is an energy and a simplicity about truth, which to the eye of experience is not to be mistaken. Alexander saw clearly that all these negotiations with Frederic implied a menace, but did not display a determination, and consequently they produced no effect. He still supported Becket, temporizing indeed with Henry, and from time to time, yielding, more than he ultimately intended to concede; but he never gave up any important points; and yet the King of England was weak enough to leave his threats unsupported by his actions, to suffer the menacing envoys whom he had sent to the Pope to pause by the way, and not even to make that denunciation to Alexander, which he had assured the Archbishop of Cologne should take place without delay.

It may be well supposed, that such conduct greatly decreased that proud reputation with which the King of England had at first set out in his royal career. The character of Becket, and his firmness, seemed to rise by the contrast; and other people, as well as that prelate himself, might believe that Henry had lost his wisdom, when he lost his minister.

In estimating the motives of the King of England, one fact is to be remarked which has not been sufficiently noticed by any one, and which in Lord Lyttleton's anxiety to elevate the character of this monarch, he has attempted to controvert, as it seems to me, without just grounds. Henry was by no means without his share of the superstition of the age. Reverence, or the capability of conceiving great veneration for any being, he probably did not possess. His whole words and actions indeed show that such was the case. His various blasphemous expressions testify that he wanted respect for the Almighty himself; and he

certainly was not likely to entertain any for a body of men, who were daily convicted, as were the English priests in those times, of all sorts of crime and wickedness. It was not probable, therefore, that he should pay any great respect to their pretended privileges; but this is a very different thing from being free from superstition; and in an age when saints and popes were supposed to work miracles, Henry might very well apprehend evil consequences arising to himself, ill success attending his arms, or danger threatening his kingdom, from the excited indignation of that representative of Saint Peter, whom he had acknowledged, and whose personal character, as well as holy office, rendered his authority more than usually impressive.

In the early part of Henry's reign, while visiting the town of Lincoln, he had resided in the suburbs, from a superstitious dread, it would appear, of the fulfilment of some old prophecy menacing to the king who should be crowned in that city; and in this very year, we have another instance both of how great was the superstition of the age, and how completely Henry shared therein. I allude to the apprehension of some unfortunate heretics, and the cruelties to which they were subjected.

These unfortunate beings are said by some writers to have fled from France into England,* where, it would appear, they remained some time unmolested. The chief or leader, we are told, had some portion of learning, but the rest were rude and illiterate, and we are assured that they had only contrived to make one convert in the kingdom. Nevertheless their fame had spread abroad, for we find that it had reached the remote abbey of Margan, improved

* The Annales de Margan say, they came "Petrariorum regionis," but others again declare that they were Germans, and of the sect called Publicans. This is the name given to them by William of Newbury, who also says that they were Germans, though he implies that the sect had its origin in Gascony.

by the wonders with which the superstition of the age generally decorated every novelty in religion. The annalist of that abbey describes these heretics as praying often, preaching continually, going about with bare feet, refusing to receive money of any one, eating no meat, drinking no wine, and partaking but frugally of any other sort of sustenance. The same annalist tells us, that they imitated the apostles ; and they certainly met with the fate of many of those whom they had thus adopted as types. William of Newbury furnishes an account of the principal errors into which they had fallen. They were Christians, he says, venerating the doctrine of the apostles ; but they repudiated all the sacraments, baptism, the eucharist, and marriage, and entertained other notions derogatory to the faith. They would not dispute upon their tenets, nor would they yield them either to admonition or to threats.

Having been examined before Henry at Oxford, these unhappy people were condemned as heretics, and delivered over to the secular arm. The monarch, without remorse, ordered each to be burnt in the forehead, their leader being burnt likewise in the chin ; and then all but their English convert, who abandoned them, had their clothes cut down to their waist, and their backs scourged till the blood flowed. They were thus driven out of Oxford, bearing the horrible cruelty of their persecutors with the utmost fortitude, singing, "Blessed are ye, when men hate you," and rejoicing in their sufferings. Death of the cruellest kind, however, was to be their ultimate fate ; for an express proclamation of the king forbade any one to receive them into a house or to give them support, and they perished miserably of cold and hunger, having no shelter but the open fields in the midst of an inclement winter. The annals of Margan indeed inform us that these heretics worked miracles, changed water into wine, and performed other wonderful feats, which the Saints of the Roman

Church had rendered somewhat too common in those days.

We find the record of another prodigy about the same period in the chronicle of Mailros, which being made with perfect gravity, may serve to show the general superstition of the age almost as strongly as Henry's treatment of these unfortunate persons, although it does not exactly bear upon the character of the monarch. A tremendous tempest took place in the province of York, "and the old enemy," the chronicler says, "was seen by many to go before the tempest on a black horse of immense size, and to fly still towards the sea; while the thunder, and the lightning, and the hail, destroying all things, pursued him with a horrid noise. Moreover, footsteps of an enormous size are remaining from the aforesaid horse of the wicked one." These were most plainly to be seen about Scarborough, we are told, where Satan took a spring into the sea from the hill.

In the same year, 1165, two comets were seen, from which portent many evils were anticipated; but the apparition the most baneful to England which that year witnessed, was in the birth of a son to the King of France. He received the name of Philip at his baptism, to which was afterwards joined, not undeservedly, that of Augustus; and in him appeared one of the most successful enemies that the Kings of England ever encountered. Henry, indeed, could not anticipate the greatness of the future sovereign, nor the evils that he would inflict upon his posterity; but with his birth vanished the hope which it would seem the English monarch entertained of seeing his son ascend the throne of France, by his marriage with the daughter of Louis. As some compensation for this disappointment, however, about this time another great acquisition was made by Henry. This was no less than the Duchy of Britanny, which gave the King of England command of

the whole French coast from the Pyrenees to a spot near the mouth of the Somme, with an extent of territory compact and united, which left the King of France scarcely an equal share of his own dominions. How this was brought about must now be related, especially as a very false view of the acquisition of Britanny has lately been put forth.

We have seen how Henry the Second acquired possession of the town and County of Nantes ; and we must not forget that Britanny, as a fief, was claimed as a feudal dependance of Normandy. During the absence of the English monarch from his continental possessions, he had left the government of Maine and Aquitaine in the hands of Eleanor his queen ; and although Louis of France did not think fit actually to attack the Queen of England in her husband's absence, yet there can be no doubt that he caballed with the nobility of Maine, prompted by that inimical spirit which he had conceived towards Henry, since that monarch's quarrel with Becket. Neither did he fail, it would appear, to promise the malcontents in that province assistance, and they had the weakness to trust to the assurances of a monarch so fickle and faithless. They had not actually taken arms against Eleanor, but they had shown such a disposition to resist her authority as to cause her great uneasiness, and probably to disquiet Henry himself in his warfare with the Welsh. Previous to this time, however, the dissensions which had at one period kept Britanny in a continual state of agitation and alarm, had been renewed by the re-assertion of the claims of Eudes, Viscount of Porhoet, although his only title to the Duchy had been totally extinguished by the death of his wife Bertha. He nevertheless formed for himself a considerable party in Britanny, and that party he contrived to increase by marrying the daughter of Guiomarck of Leon, a distinguished leader, who, with his father, now attached himself

to the faction of Eudes, although he was bound by strong ties of gratitude to Conan the legitimate Duke.

One occasion on which Conan, by rendering a vast service to the house of Leon, might imagine that he had gained that family for ever to his cause, must be mentioned here, not simply to show their ingratitude only, because that was and is too common a vice to require any remark, but in order to display the barbarous state of the Duchy of Brittany at that time. The nobles of that province maintained, in its full force, the ancient feudal right of private warfare, which existed, indeed, with various restrictions, throughout the greater part of France for many years after this period, but had been nearly extinguished in England and Normandy. Every petty lord, as opportunity served or passion dictated, declared war against his neighbour, ravaged his lands, slew his serfs, and attacked his castle ; and a feud of this kind existing between the Lords of Leon and Fou, the latter laid an ambush for Hervé Viscount de Leon and his son Guiomarck, into which they both fell, and were taken.

The Bishop of Saint Paul, son of the one and brother of the other, instantly raised the vassals and retainers of the family, and marching to attack a castle in which they were confined, called Chateaulin, despatched at the same time a messenger to the Duke, informing him of the condition of his relations, and beseeching some reinforcements. Conan without a moment's delay put himself at the head of his forces, marched to the attack of Chateaulin, took it with great bravery, and delivered the Viscount de Leon and his son Guiomarck, made prisoners the Viscount du Fou, his brother, and his son. These three were immediately shut up in the Castle of Daoulas, where they were left to perish with hunger and with thirst, offering to the barbarians of a later epoch an example of cruelty, which was followed almost to the letter. This event took place in 1163 ; and

early in the following year, we find that the Viscount de Leon and Guiomarck, whose daughter was by this time married to Eudes, were arrayed in favour of that Prince against their benefactor and deliverer. At the same time, and acting on the same side, appears Raoul de Fougeres, who had previously shown himself one of the firmest friends of Conan.

Thus deserted by some of his most powerful supporters, Conan had no resource but to seek some foreign aid; and in 1164 he applied to Henry, to whom indeed he had a right to appeal for assistance as to his feudal superior. Henry, then embarrassed by the disputes with Becket, and by the insurrection in Wales, could do no more than order one of his officers in Normandy, named Richard of Humeres, to raise some forces in the duchy, and march to support the Duke of Britanny. This was done with some success, and the towns of Combour and Dol were taken from the enemy in the autumn of 1164.

The nobles of Britanny, however, were by no means subdued; and accustomed to resist all authority, they were probably but the more inclined to cast off the yoke of Conan, from his having called upon the King of England for aid. This disposition of the barons of Britanny was encouraged by the promises of Louis; and the revolt of Maine would appear to have been planned between the discontented lords of that province itself, the King of France, and the insurgents of Britanny. According to the usually received rules of policy, Louis was undoubtedly better advised in this instance, than in any of the steps he had taken since the death of Suger; for Henry was by far too powerful in France; and to give occupation to his activity in his own territories, if it could be done without actually calling his arms into French territory, was the best course that the sovereign of that country could pursue.

Henry, however, warned of what was going on, and

eagerly entreated by the Duke of Britanny to put down the rebellion, returned to France early in the year 1166, and directed his first efforts against the malcontents of Maine, who were soon reduced to obedience, and were punished by the loss of their strongholds, and in many instances by the imprisonment of their persons. He next marched into Britanny at the head of a large force, and instead of wasting his vigour in desultory efforts against the inferior insurgents, he turned his arms at once against Fougeres, which was at that time a place of very great strength. This town was in fact the key of the duchy; and, built upon a hill, with the two small rivers Nanson and Cœsnon wandering through the plains at the foot, it commanded the whole country round, and was at all times extremely difficult of attack. Into it the lord of Fougeres had thrown himself, having had time to collect a large force, to strengthen the place as far as possible, and to cut down the green corn, and all the forage for many leagues around. Thus, at the approach of Henry, in the end of June, 1166, that monarch found the fortress filled with troops commanded by an able general, amply supplied with provisions, ammunition, and every implement of war, the country round it completely desolated, the roads blocked up with stockades and thorn-bushes, and the plains and fields, in which his cavalry might have acted, pierced with innumerable pitfalls, which rendered every movement dangerous.

His honour, however, and reputation, were now completely at stake, and he felt that he must not only capture Fougeres, but must do so in a brilliant and a notable manner. After having overcome the first difficulties, which impeded his near approach to the town, he determined rather to hazard much to gain much, than to wait the slow progress of a lengthened siege, during which the King of France might rouse himself into activity, and attack some other part of his territories in order to withdraw him from

Britanny, or else the other insurgents in the duchy itself might be encouraged by the slowness of his progress, and assemble sufficient force to raise the siege of Fougeres. He determined, therefore, upon the bold, perhaps the rash measure, of attempting to take a town so situated by storm. The assault, however, succeeded completely ; the English and Normans poured in sword in hand, and the insurgents within were forced to throw down their arms, after a gallant but ineffectual resistance. I do not find that any cruelty was committed. The chiefs remained prisoners of war and the castle was pillaged and rased to the ground.

It would appear that before the capture of Fougeres, an understanding, if not an actual treaty, existed between Conan and Henry, regarding the possession of the duchy of Britanny. In the year 1160, Conan had married the sister of Malcolm, King of Scotland, by whom he had only one daughter, Constance, afterwards celebrated for her own misfortunes, and for the tragic fate of her son Arthur.

The Duke of Britanny himself, though he had shown some activity in the earlier part of his career, and still from time to time exerted himself for a brilliant effort, was fond of ease, and was of a ductile and not very vigorous mind. The turbulent state of the duchy, the frequent necessity of contesting the possession with his stepfather Eudes, the persuasions of the English monarch, and very probably the influence of his own wife, who, like her brother Malcolm, was strongly attached to the house of Plantagenet, easily induced Conan the Less to consent to a treaty of marriage between his daughter Constance, and Geoffrey, the third son then living of Henry the Second. It was arranged between the Duke of Britanny and the English monarch, that the young prince and princess should be solemnly affianced to each other, and that the duchy of Britanny should be given up to them on the consummation of their union. In the meanwhile, however, the custody of the heiress of the duchy,

together with all power and rule therein, was to be vested in Henry, Conan only reserving to himself the county of Guingamp, which was sufficient for that prince's ambition.*

At what precise point of time this treaty was entered into, I do not know; but it is certain that before the capture of Fougeres, Henry levied a sort of contribution or tax in Britanny, for the support of the Christians in Palestine. He had also levied the same in Normandy; but there it was done with the full consent, or rather by a vote of the nobles of the province, which does not appear to have been the case in Britanny. After the fall of Fougeres, the greater part of the barons of the duchy, intimidated by his brilliant success, submitted, and did homage to the English king, but Henry did not remain long to secure his newly-acquired possession. Indeed the extraordinary rapidity of this prince's movements almost leaves the slow march of history behind. At one hour we find him in the heart of Britanny, the next he is making war in Auvergne.

The county of Auvergne was a fief of the Duchy of Aquitaine, but the bonds between the two were very slight, and I do not find any act by which the feudal connexion was marked during the lapse of many years before the present time. William VI., Count of Auvergne, left two sons, Robert, who succeeded him, and William. Robert died, leaving another son named William VII., who was almost immediately dispossessed of the county by his uncle, and sometimes took the title of Count du Puy, though both princes are more usually called Counts of Auvergne. The two were reconciled after a certain time, and appear to have

* It is certain that such a treaty did take place, and that in virtue thereof Henry exercised sovereignty in Britanny, and received the homage of the Breton nobles; and yet I find in the curious old chronicle of Nantes, usually called the *Chroniques Annaulx*, under the year 1170: "Conanus in Leone cum Guihomaro congriditur," as if Conan was still recognised as Duke, and waging war with one of his revolted vassals.

been amongst the most notorious plunderers of the age. To put a stop to their malefactions, Louis, King of France, marched into their territories, defeated them, made them both prisoners, and kept them in confinement for a considerable time. From their prison, they applied for aid to the King of England as their feudal lord, and he, in return, claimed their deliverance from the French monarch. After some delay, in order apparently to save the dignity of Louis, the two Counts were set at liberty ; and almost immediately their ancient quarrel concerning the succession of Auvergne broke out afresh, upon which Henry was appealed to as their sovereign. Henry accordingly advanced into the county, ordering the two Counts to meet him on a day which he fixed ; but the elder, not trusting to his right of possession, did not appear, appealed to the court of the King of France, and, it would seem, sought the protection of that monarch in person. Henry, in the meantime, decided the cause in favour of the nephew, whose just right the county was, and very shortly after the siege of Fougeres, attacked some territories of the usurping Count of Auvergne as a punishment for the violation of feudal law which that nobleman had committed in carrying the cause between himself and his nephew to the court of the King of France. Louis, it would appear, contrary to the legal rights of Henry, had thought fit to act as judge ; and the war which the latter now waged in Auvergne thus personally affected the King of France, who, instigated by his nobles, immediately pronounced it an injury to himself, and in retaliation attacked the Norman Vexin, and ravaged a considerable part of that territory. Henry returned in haste, and held a conference with Louis, in the hope of adjusting their claims amicably. But the jealousy or the patriotism of the French King's courtiers, the instigations of Becket, and the great preparations which had been made for the war, all combined to render Louis obdurate and difficult to be satisfied. The confer-

ence broke up, without producing any pacific result, and hostilities were almost immediately renewed.

In the early part of 1167, the French forces continued their ravages on the frontiers of Normandy, and the Andelis were burnt by the troops of Louis. Henry however carried hostilities into the French Vexin, and knowing that Louis had established his chief magazines at Chaumont, a place considered almost impregnable, he attacked, took, and burnt the town to the ground ; destroying or seizing all his enemy's stores, as well as his military chest, which act, in fact, put a stop to the war, as Louis's means of protracting it were lost in Chaumont ; and a truce was agreed upon in August, to last till after Easter in the following year.

In the meantime, circumstances had arisen in Britanny which rendered this suspension of hostilities a very seasonable relief to the King of England. I cannot discover whether the Viscount de Leon, and his valiant son Guiomarck, had been amongst those who actually did homage to Henry after the fall of Fougeres, though there can be but little doubt that they affected submission ; but taking advantage of the dissensions between the King of England and Louis, they were already in arms before the end of the year 1167. The name of Guiomarck stands at the head of the list of insurgents ; but Eudes, Viscount of Porhoet, was also a party to the revolt, as well as almost all the noblemen of any consequence who had formerly given him support, except indeed the Lord of Fougeres. Henry immediately marched from the Vexin into Britanny, and following his usual policy of always striking first at the chief of his enemies, he advanced into the territories of Leon, attacked and took, one after another, the castles and fortresses of Guiomarck and the Viscount, and reducing them both to submit, demanded and obtained hostages from them, and from the other insurgents,* one of the hostages given by

* The historians of Britanny leave no doubt that Henry was in that

Eudes being Alice, his daughter by Bertha, and consequently half-sister of Conan. Henry was called into Normandy by the death of his mother Matilda, before he had time to complete his measures for maintaining the peace of the duchy of Britanny ; and the instigations and promises of the King of France once more had their effect upon the discontented nobles of that province and Aquitaine. The revolt in the latter district we shall have to notice hereafter ; but in Britanny the unfortunate Eudes again conspired and leagued himself with the Viscount of Thouars and various discontented nobles of Poitou, not without some prospect of success. The truce with the King of France was soon about to expire ; and though Henry endeavoured to make it the basis of a solid peace, the French king took advantage of every accident to avoid such a result, sought every occasion of offence, and in a conference at Bourges, Louis and the insurgents mutually bound themselves not to make peace separately with the King of England.

The affairs of that monarch wore a very formidable aspect towards the commencement of 1168 ; a sentence of excommunication hung over his head in consequence of his quarrel with Becket ; Britanny, Aquitaine, and Poitou, were either in actual insurrection, or on the eve of a general revolt ; and the King of France had so positively pledged himself to support the insurgent barons of all those provinces, that it was impossible for him to recede with honour. About the same time two events occurred, which still farther incensed the King of England against his continental nobles, and those nobles against the King. The Earl of Salisbury, who had been left by Henry in Poitou, as his lieutenant, was treacherously murdered by Guy of Lussignan, afterwards more famous in history ; but on the other province in 1167 and gained the advantages here stated over the Breton insurgents. Lord Lyttleton passes over the events of this expedition in silence, or confounds them with those of the preceding year.

hand the English monarch exasperated his adversaries to the highest pitch of fury, by an act of the most brutal and shameless kind.

As is well known, the moral character of Henry, throughout life, was anything but pure; but at this period there appears a charge against him of so foul and base a nature, that we may wish for the honour of human nature there was any means of disproving it. It must be remembered that the daughter of Eudes had been given as a hostage for her father's faith and submission, and that, unmindful of the brutality which Henry had displayed towards the Welsh hostages, he had again broken out into revolt. In revenge for her father's perfidy, Henry is said to have forcibly violated the person of the unfortunate girl.* The king's former treatment of his hostages was certainly cruel, although it has been defended upon the grounds of necessity; but this was an act of baseness scarcely paralleled in the history of modern Europe. The effect was, of course, but to aggravate the rancorous animosity of Eudes, and he was busily taking measures to render his insurrection successful, when all his plans were frustrated by the extraordinary activity of the English monarch.

Without giving himself any time for repose, Henry, after having chastised the insurgents and criminals of Poitou, as will be shown hereafter, marched at once into Britanny and attacked Eudes in the midst of his own territory. With a rapidity truly wonderful, he reduced almost every castle and town belonging to the Viscount, and then turning to the inferior insurgents, he took the high fort of Becherel, and many other small places, meeting with no check or repulse during the months of May and June. At the end of the latter month, he hurried across the country to confer with

* The historians of Britanny assert that force was used, though the English and Normans are silent on that point.

the King of France at La Ferté Bernard, where a meeting which had with difficulty been concerted, was to take place between them. The Breton nobles, as well as others whom I shall have occasion to mention in another place, appealed to Louis more as a judge than an ally, and Henry could of course only act towards the French king as monarch with monarch. The bonds were drawn closer between Louis and the insurgents, the breach between Henry and the French sovereign was widened ; and, as we shall see hereafter, the meeting did not take place, though the parties approached within a few miles of each other.

The two kings returned to their territories with the intention of immediately resuming hostilities, and carrying them on with greater activity than before. The effect, however, was not such as might be anticipated from the enmity of two powerful monarchs, and the strife of two mighty nations. Little was done on either side ; and at the festival of the Epiphany, in the following year, a more satisfactory arrangement of their differences took place between Henry and Louis, in which the English monarch's skill and perseverance obtained many objects which he sought, even while he appeared to be making concessions.

In the meantime, however, Henry had continued unshaken in the exercise of sovereignty in the Duchy ; and the possession thereof was secured to him and to his son Geoffrey, by the treaty of peace which was soon after entered into between him and the King of France, and of which I shall speak when I proceed to notice more fully the events that had been taking place in Poitou.

To all the particulars, indeed, of that treaty I shall have to return shortly, in order to notice various clauses contained in it, which have an especial reference to this history ; but it may be necessary, for the purpose of showing the exact position in which the English monarch was placed, to give an account of several other events which

occurred during the struggles of Britanny, and the desultory warfare with France, before I turn to the affairs of Poitou and Aquitaine.

In the midst of the difficulties and embarrassments which surrounded Henry at this time, while in open hostility with the Archbishop, with the thunders of Rome hanging over his head, with his subjects in revolt in many of his hereditary territories on the continent, his newly-acquired possession of Britanny shaken by the resistance of some of the most distinguished nobles of that country, his Welsh vassals waging a successful warfare for the recovery of their independence, and the French monarch repaying his great services by ravaging his territories and supporting all his enemies, Henry suddenly found two princes, who had ever been friendly towards him, join the party of his foes, and prepare to invade his dominions. These were the Count of Flanders, and his brother, the Count of Boulogne, one of whom had been under Henry's guardianship, while the other was indebted to him for the very territories that he possessed. Nevertheless, the present enmity of the Count of Boulogne and his brother was not without some cause, to explain which, it may be necessary to go back, for a few particulars, as far as the reign of Stephen.

It will be remembered that on the conclusion of the treaty between Stephen and Henry, which secured the succession of the crown to the latter, the only surviving son of Stephen, named William, was assured possession of the County of Boulogne, and all the other hereditary territories of his father Stephen, comprising the County of Mortagne in Normandy. Besides these, various estates in England, which had been given to him by his father, were also secured to him by Henry. I am not aware, whether there were or were not also some hereditary lands in England granted by William the Conqueror to Eustace, Count of Boulogne, and conveyed to Stephen by that Count's

daughter, whom he married. Neither do I know whether the territories which Stephen had granted to his son were secured to him by Henry as hereditary possessions or not ; nor upon what terms the manor of Pevensey, and some other estates which Henry spontaneously added, were conceded to William. However that may be, the son of Stephen not only enjoyed the whole of these territories during his life, but seemed perfectly contented with the treatment he received from Henry, attached himself much to that Prince, and accompanied him during the campaign against the Count of Toulouse. In returning from that expedition, William of Blois died childless. The hand of his widow, together with the large estates she had inherited from her father, Henry conferred upon his own natural brother, Hamelin ; and the County of Mortagne he gave to his own younger brother William. The English estates also were, I doubt not, bestowed by the King upon some of his faithful followers, being considered as escheats, in which point of view Henry indisputably regarded the County of Mortagne.

So far all was well, and no one could complain of the King's acts ; for the legitimate posterity of Stephen was now extinct, with the exception of one daughter, Mary, who might be considered as dead in the eye of the law, having taken the veil in the Abbey of Romsey, in Hampshire. The County of Boulogne still remained to be disposed of ; but that being a fief of the County of Flanders, Henry had now no power over it ; and it might have become a subject of contention amongst the collateral relations of William of Blois, as the Count of Flanders could not bestow it except according to the feudal law, had not Henry consented, and probably suggested, a measure very gratifying to the Count but which now ended in producing enmity between his son and Henry. As we have seen, a great friendship existed between the King of England and Thierry, Count of Flan-

ders, whose son was for some time under the guardianship of the monarch; and towards the beginning of the year 1160, which was a few months after the death of William of Blois, it was arranged between the two princes, that Matthew, a younger son of Thierry, should marry Mary, the nun of Romsey.

A papal dispensation could have been obtained easily, had not a schism existed in the church, which rendered it dangerous for Henry to apply to either of the rival Popes, in a manner that might be considered as a recognition of his authority. To obviate this difficulty, Henry permitted Matthew to carry off Mary of Blois from the Abbey of Romsey; and the princess gave her hand, very willingly it would seem, to her young deliverer in the month of May, 1160. By her he obtained possession of the County of Boulogne; but I do not find that he asserted any claim, either to the County of Mortagne, or to William of Blois' estates in England, till after the death of Henry's brother, which took place in 1164.

The embarrassing situation in which Henry was now placed, certainly offered a favourable moment for making such a demand, though expediency, that great enemy of all that is noble and just in the dealings of states and princes, was opposed by both gratitude and generosity. It is probable, however, that Matthew was instigated to claim all the possessions of William of Blois by the eager counsels of the King of France, who was now paying great court to the Counts of Flanders, and had invited Philip, on whom his father Thierry had devolved the cares of government, to act as godfather to his son, in the year 1165.*

* I have given a somewhat different account of these events from that afforded by Lord Lyttleton, who says, I cannot help thinking by mistake, that the County of Mortagne "was on the decease of that monarch (Stephen) considered as an escheat." Now there cannot be the slightest doubt, that William of Blois had possession of Mortagne

At all events we find, that in 1166 the applications of the Count of Boulogne to be put in possession of Mortagne, and of the English estates which he now claimed, became urgent ; and upon Henry's refusal to accede to his demand he and his brother Philip collected an immense fleet and army, and prepared to invade England, while Henry was in the midst of contentions with the King of France.

Six hundred vessels are said to have been engaged ; but luckily, the assembling of such forces could not take place upon the coast of Flanders, without being known both in Normandy and England. Every freeman in the land was, in those days, bred to the use of arms ; and the Saxon obligation of realm-defence was, as I have shown in another place, in full force, notwithstanding the changes produced by the complete introduction of the feudal system.

Richard de Lucy, the High Justiciary, was entrusted by Henry, who was detained in France, with the protection of England ; and drawing out the whole of the array of the maritime counties, he made such a formidable display of native strength, that the Counts of Flanders and Boulogne did not dare to land, and turned their arms to another quarter. In the meanwhile, however, Henry had entered into negotiations with those princes, concerning an amicable arrangement of the claims of the Count of Boulogne ; and in the end, that nobleman agreed to compound all his demands for the sum of one thousand pounds sterling per

till his death, which took place five years after the decease of his father. This is clearly established by the date of the gift of the County to William Plantagenet, which did not take place till after the death of Stephen's son in 1159. I have also ventured to state, that Philip of Flanders was invited to the baptism of Philip Augustus, in direct opposition to one of the commentators upon D'Oudegherst, who quotes Suger's History of Louis the Seventh, to show who were the sponsors of Philip Augustus, when it unfortunately happens, that Suger was dead fourteen years before Philip Augustus was born.

annum, which has been supposed equal to about sixteen thousand pounds of our present money. The treaty, by which this agreement was concluded, was extremely beneficial to Henry ; for the Count of Boulogne, by the terms thereof, bound himself to receive this annuity as a beneficium, for which he engaged to do military service, and to render homage and fealty to the King of England, so that thereby, he was changed from an enemy into an ally ; and a new hold was obtained by the crown of England upon the Counts of Flanders.

It may be necessary, however, to notice here, that previous to this period, namely, in the year 1163, Henry had entered into a subsidiary treaty with Thierry and his son Philip, shortly before the former departed for the Holy Land, by the terms of which Henry granted an annuity to the Count upon the condition of military service ; and it is not easy to discover upon what plea the Sovereign of Flanders so far broke the engagements of this convention, as to appear in arms against England in 1166.

A brief summary must now be given of the progress of the dispute between Becket and the king, from the period of the unsuccessful embassy which Henry sent to Pope Alexander at Sens ; though we have already noticed some of the principal facts, and need not trace the course of this affair very minutely during Becket's exile, as but few events affecting greatly the general course of this history present themselves in that space of time.

The death of Victor, the confederation of several Italian cities in favour of his opponent, and other circumstances of a similar kind, had induced Alexander to try his fortunes once more in Italy, and he had succeeded in establishing himself in Rome. We have seen, that Henry's indignation towards Becket had in no degree decreased ; and that he had even extended that indignation towards Alexander, in the menaces written to the Archbishop of Cologne, and

pronounced by Henry's ambassadors at Wurzburgh. Neither, on the other hand, had Becket or the Pope in the least receded from their pretensions ; and the acts and the threats of the King of England only irritated, without dismaying, them. All the relations and dependents of Becket were driven out of England ; and we are told that an oath was exacted of them to join the exiled prelate at Pontigny, whither he had gone, after leaving Alexander at Sens. Near four hundred persons, men, women, and children at the breast, were comprised in this proscription, their lands and goods were confiscated, and they were thus sent to Becket in misery and want. But this base and cruel act did not produce the effect that Henry intended ; for the very name of the prelate had become a recommendation to the princes and nobles of Europe, and in general his relations and friends thus banished, found plenty to support them and promote their fortunes. About the same time, or a little before, the payment of Peter pence to the Pope was stopped, the revenues of Becket himself, and of all the ecclesiastics who followed him into exile, were seized, and the clergy were strictly forbidden to pray for him in the churches.

In return, Becket thundered forth denunciations against the monarch, wrote to him letter after letter of an insolent and a menacing character, and loudly announced his determination of excommunicating his king, and persecuting, to the utmost of his power, the bishops and clergy who had supported Henry. The bishops again appealed to the Pope ; and Alexander, embarrassed with his own dangers and difficulties, lest many of their addresses either unnoticed, or very briefly answered ; but in the meanwhile he gave Becket full power to try and punish, by ecclesiastical means, all those inferior persons who had done him or his friends any injury, thereby making him judge in his own cause. In regard to the King of England, the Pope left to

Becket the discretionary power of acting in whatever way he might think his archiepiscopal station justified ; and that prelate instantly determined to proceed, without remorse, to the excommunication of his sovereign and his benefactor. He was preparing for the execution of this resolution in the manner that he judged most likely to produce a great effect upon the minds of men, visiting shrines, and holding vigils by the tombs of saints, when a change took place in the fortunes of the Pope Alexander himself, which brought about an alteration of measures very unfavourable to the views of Becket.

The news of this change, indeed, would not have reached the exiled Archbishop in time to prevent him from fulminating his sentence of excommunication at Henry himself, had not that monarch been seized with a dangerous illness, which induced Louis King of France to entreat or to command the prelate to suspend his purpose for a time. There can be little doubt that but for the intercession of the French monarch, no pious considerations would have caused Becket to pause in the course of his revenge ; and, in order to sate himself as far as possible, he proceeded at once to excommunicate a number of the king's most faithful friends and servants, using the legatine power with which the Pope invested him in October 1165 in the service of his angry passions.

In the meantime, however, Henry, before he was seized with the illness we have mentioned, had called an assembly at Chinon, and in consequence of the advice he received from the bishops and nobles present, had interposed an appeal to the Pope against the authority of Becket. This was an inconsistent act, as he had himself forbidden his clergy to have recourse to the same expedient, and Becket's friends triumphed in proportion ; but Becket himself did not receive intimation of the appeal till after he had suspended the sentence of excommunication which he had

been about to pronounce. At the same time, negotiations were going on between Henry and Alexander, which wrought an extraordinary change, for the time, in the position of both parties. The Marquis of Montferrat, anxious to increase his power, which was already very great, by an alliance with a monarch of such authority as the King of England, sent ambassadors to Henry, beseeching him to give one of the daughters of the house of Plantagenet in marriage to his heir; and it is moreover asserted these ambassadors were instructed to promise the king, that if the request were granted, the Marquis would take such measures as to lead to the deposition of Becket from the archbishopric of Canterbury.

What assurances the Lord of Montferrat could give Henry in regard to his power of performing so mighty an undertaking, we cannot now tell; but that he possessed some strong influence over the mind of Alexander there can be no doubt. Henry immediately acceded to the request of the Marquis, and, apparently at his suggestion, sent three ambassadors to treat with Alexander, the chief of whom was no other than that John of Oxford, who, in execution of the king's commands, had already been excommunicated. Henry must have been very well assured that his ministers would meet with a favourable reception, before he chose so obnoxious a person, as one of his envoys to the Pope. The embassy was undoubtedly successful in a much greater degree than could have been expected; the pontiff received the present representatives of Henry with far more kindness than he had displayed towards the king's former ambassadors. John of Oxford surrendered into his hands the Deanery of Salisbury, which Becket had declared uncanonically conferred, and immediately received it back again from the pontiff, with absolution for that and all his other sins. Presenting letters from the English monarch to the Bishop of Rome, in which Henry declared that he

would preserve to his clergy the liberty they had possessed from the time of his grandfather, Henry the First, the ambassadors obtained a distinct promise, that two legates should be sent to examine and judge both between Becket and the English bishops, and between him and the king. Their sentence was to be definitive, and one of the legates named was William of Pavia, who had always shown himself devoted in his friendship towards Henry.

This was even more than the King of England had demanded at first by the ambassador sent to Sens ; but probably the dangerous situation of Alexander himself, against whom the tide of fortune was once more beginning to turn, and who varied his conduct towards Henry according to the fluctuation of the stream, was one of the chief causes of the placability of the papal court.

The Emperor, Frederic Barbarossa, had, in the commencement of 1166, assembled a sufficient force to recover his power in Lombardy, and to threaten the security of Rome itself. Alexander had done the worst that he could do by the thunders of the church, and had produced little or no effect either in reducing Frederic to obedience, or in detaching his subjects and vassals from him ; and thus nothing remained for the defence of the reigning pontiff, but an inferior fraction in Italy itself, and the support of France and England. The friendship of the latter power was already terribly shaken. Not only had Henry himself held out threats not to be misunderstood of abandoning the party of Alexander, and going over to Pascal ; but the bishops had at various times informed the pope whom they recognized, that such was very likely to be the case. The present then was the moment when Alexander had most to fear that Henry, taking advantage of Frederic's first successes, would join the emperor in his operations for the elevation of Pascal, and render his power irresistible.

Many other causes might combine to affect the papal

policy. The authority of the Marquis of Montferrat was very considerable, and his influence in the north of Italy great. Henry also might—and the friends of Becket asserted that he did—once more use the potent eloquence of gold, to gain the pliant cardinals ; but whether any secret motive combined with those which are apparent to influence the pope in Henry's favour, a greater change was certainly effected in the views of the pontiff, than could be brought about by anything but a very powerful cause. Not contented with the concession he had at first made, he sent back by John of Oxford the papal dispensation for the marriage of Henry's son Geoffrey with Constance of Brittany, they being within the forbidden degrees of consanguinity ; and he moreover prohibited Becket from troubling Henry or his kingdom in any manner, and declared null and void any sentence of excommunication or interdict which the archbishop might have pronounced before the receipt of his letters. He promised the king, also, that the legates should absolve all his friends and servants from the excommunication under which they already lay, and at once authorized them to receive absolution from the hands of any bishop or priest in case of illness producing apprehension of death.*

These provisions were indeed very necessary, for before they arrived, Becket had received from the pope, as I have before shown, a commission, giving him the complete legatine power over the whole of England, except the Diocese of York, which authority Becket had immediately proceeded to employ in the most intemperate and furious manner.

* The pope's letter upon this subject is so extremely curious, that I cannot refrain from transcribing it as it appears in Hoveden : “ Alexander Episcopus servus servorum Dei, illustri Anglorum regi Henrico salutem et Apostolicam benedictionem. Magnificentiae tuæ nuntios, scilicet dilectos filios nostros Johannem Cumin et Radulsum de Tamwerde nobis, et ecclesiæ Dei denotus, regiæ sublimitati (sicut credimus) per omnia fidelissimos, et literas, quas excellentia tua nobis per eosdem transmisit, tanto benigniori mente suscepimus, et tanto eos majori gratia præveni-

Henry, on his part, had done all in his power to guard his kingdom against the vengeance of Becket armed with

mus, et honore, quanto plenius scivimus ipsos à magnifico principe, et rege Christianissimo fuisse transmissos: cui utique omnem, quam cum Deo possumus, gloriam cupimus et honorem, et ad cujus incrementum modis omnibus quibus honeste poterimus, nos et fratres nostri ac tota ecclesia quanto devotissimæ sinceritatis tuæ affectum in majori sumus necessitate experti, tanto ardenter intendimus aspirare. Non enim tuæ devotionis insignia nobis tempore tam opportuno exhibita à nostra in posterum memoria, ulla poterit ratione divelli, vel in conspectu ecclesiæ aliqua desuetudine inumbrari. Petitiones quoque tuas, quas nobis per jam dictos nuntios misisti, in quaib[us] cum Deo et honestate nostra potuimus, sicut iidem magnificentia tuae nuntii viva voce plenius enarrabunt, curavimus executioni mandare. Personas siquidem de latere nostro, juxtaque rogasti, licet nobis gravissimum, ac difficilimum hoc tempore maxime videatur aliquos à nobis emittere, cum fratum nostrorum et corum præsertim quos tu desideras præsentia et concilio opus habeamus, illius tamen recolendæ, ac magnificæ devotionis tuae, ut diximus, non immemores existentes, ad sublimitatis tuae præsentiam duximus destinandas cum plenitudine potestatis, ecclesiasticas causas, quæ inter te et venerabilem, fratum nostrum Archiépiscum Cantuariensem hunc inde vertuntur, et illam que inter eundem archiep. et episc. regni tui super appellatione ad nos facta movetur, necon alias causas terre quas noverint expedire, cognoscendi judicandique et prout sibi dominus administraverit, canonice terminandi. Eadem quoque archiepiscopo ne te aut tuos seu regnum gubernationi tuae commissum, donec causæ illæ debitum sortiantur effectum in aliquo gravare vel turbare aut inquietare attinet, omnimodis inhibemus. Verum si præfatus archiepiscopus in te, aut regnum tuum, vel personas regni interim aliquam sententiam tulerit, nos eam irritam esse, et non te tenere censemus, ad inductionem autem hujus rei, et argumentum nostræ voluntatis, literas præsentes, si articulus ingruerit necessitatibus ostendas. Alioquin serenitatem tuam rogamus et attentius commonemus, ut literas ipsas, aut earum tenorem à nullo sciri permittas, sed eas habeas omnino secretas. Illos autem familiares et consiliarios tuos, quos jam dictus archiepiscopus sententiæ excommunicationis subjicit, personæ de latere nostro transmissæ, domino auctore, absolvant. Si autem aliquis illorum interim metu mortis laboraverit, præstito secundum ecclesiæ consuetudinem juramento, quod nostro si convaluerit debeat parere mandato, ipsum ab aliquo episcopo vel religioso, et discreto viro, absolvì concedimus."

Sawyer
Smith
1860
London
C. W. M.
1860

the artillery of Rome ; and, in this respect, the insular situation of England gave him some facilities. He ordered that a strict watch should be kept upon all the ports, lest persons bringing over anything in the shape of an interdict should find their way into the country. If any one were detected in the attempt, various punishments were denounced against the offender according to his profession : if he were one of the regular orders of monks, his feet were to be cut off ; if a priest, his eyes were to be put out, and he was to be castrated ; if a layman, he was to be hung ; if a leper—and numbers of these unfortunate beings were at that time wandering about Europe—he was to be burnt alive. If, in consequence of an interdict, any priest were to refuse the services of the Church, he was likewise to be emasculated.

These were terrible denunciations ; but nevertheless it must be admitted that the very fact of aiding to produce in any country the horrors of an interdict was also a terrible crime. Nevertheless, notwithstanding these severe laws, and all the care that Henry's officers could employ, some persons found means to bring into England, not indeed an interdict, but letters from Becket to various prelates, and the Pope's mandate appointing him legate for England. The mandate, and a copy of a letter from Becket to all the bishops of England, with the exception of those of the province of York, commanding them in his quality of legate to appear before him within forty days, were delivered to the Bishop of London at the high altar of Saint Paul's Church, as he was performing the mass of that Saint on the day of his conversion. There were various other injunctions contained in these letters ; and so alarming was this display of power, even to such a strong-minded man as the Bishop of London, that he besought Henry's permission to execute all Becket's commands, and notwithstanding an express prohibition, prepared to obey

the summons he had received to appear in the presence of the legate, and even proceeded to Winchester, for the purpose of going over into France. At Southampton, too, the Bishop of Hereford was waiting for a fair wind to accomplish the same object, when by one of those extraordinary coincidences that occur from time to time to affect the fates of men, the wind which detained him, wasted to the shores of England, and to the same port, John of Oxford, the King's chief envoy to the Papal court. He announced to the glad ears of the Bishop of Hereford the tidings which he brought from Rome; but that prelate would not be satisfied, till he was fully assured of the contents of the papal letters; and, as John of Oxford had sent them on with his baggage to Winchester, the Bishop's chaplain was despatched to read them there. This quite satisfied the Bishop, and he turned upon his steps with joy, doubtless very grateful to the wind, which had stayed his progress into France.

Henry rejoiced and triumphed; but Becket burst into fury and the most indecent expressions of indignation when informed of what had taken place. He reproached the Pope loudly amongst his friends; but whilst he declared openly that Alexander had strangled the Church of England, he addressed to him a load of blasphemous adulation, which might well have disgusted a wise man, and horrified a pious one. The King of France too, indignant at the Pope's concession to his enemy the King of England, made his anger loudly known; and it is probable that this intimation, on the part of Louis, had more effect than the invectives or supplications of Becket. Alexander, whose policy was rather to temporize with Henry than to yield to him, limited the powers of the legates by the way, and sent them on their journey with a commission totally different from that which had been first granted to them at the solicitation of John of Oxford. There can be but

little or no doubt, also, that they received instructions to spend as much time on the road as possible ;* for although the north of Italy was infested by the troops of the Emperor, who was on his way to Rome, so that some time might be wasted in avoiding the dangers of the way, yet the extraordinary delay which occurred ere the legates entered even the territory of France, can only be accounted for by the supposition that they were directed not to make more speed than necessary. The conduct of Alexander, indeed, through the whole of this business, offers a contrast to that of Becket, very favourable to the latter. Becket was at least consistent after he quitted England. He never varied ; he uniformly maintained the same doctrines, he always kept up the same fiery zeal in their support ; his tone, his conduct, and his object were the same ; and one might well believe that the great motive of all his actions was an enthusiastic and superstitious veneration for the Church of which he was a member, did not passages in his own writings and the evasion of any sacrifice on his own part, which would have restored peace to England, as well as the very objects which he pretended to seek, prove incontestably, that pride was the grand principle of his conduct, and self-elevation, whether as priest, saint, or martyr, the object of all his endeavours. Nevertheless, in contemplating his conduct at this time, and also his demeanour on the day of his death, one cannot help feeling a certain degree of admiration mingle with our thoughts, and perhaps pervert our judgment, at the sight of such powers of mind, such strength and firmness of character, such resolution, and fearlessness of heart, although the high qualities that we may justly venerate were employed for an unworthy and evil purpose, and subservient to selfish passions and individual ambition.

* We know that they received orders not to enter England till the dispute between Henry and the Archbishop was adjusted.

On the other hand, Alexander displayed a temporizing policy, which, however successful, can never be carried on without some loss of character, either by men or by states. As soon as fear seized him or danger threatened him, he made concessions to Henry, which he rendered impotent, or revoked altogether, either as soon as the peril was passed, or the risk of conceding became, through the anger of the King of France, greater than that of resisting.

Whenever he was powerful and triumphant, he showed himself arbitrary and imperious, but he was always as ready to stoop for the purpose of rising again, as he was to ascend at first. We thus see various changes of policy on the part of Alexander towards Henry and Becket very discreditable to the Pontiff, and which can hardly bear any other name than that of dishonesty, when joined with those injunctions to secrecy which his letters display. In fact Becket was the lion of the struggle, Alexander the fox, and what between the sagacity of the one, and the vigour of the other, Henry's whole power was unable to resist them.

Alexander, however, had not yet reached the point to which his fortunes were once more to descend ; and while the legates were slowly pursuing their way towards France, Frederic advanced, subduing as he went all things in the north of Italy before him. The people of Tusculum and Albano had always shown themselves favourable to the Emperor, and were looking for his approach with gladness, when a Roman army marched out to ravage their territories, contrary, we are assured, to the wishes and exhortations of Alexander, although one of the assigned causes of the attack was their refusal to pay the papal tribute. Frederic was at this time besieging Ancona, and to him the people of Tusculum applied for immediate aid. After some delay, owing either to the incapacity or neglect of Frederic's officers, during which the partisans of the general

Father of the Christian world ravaged in the most brutal manner the lands of his unfortunate children of Tusculum, cutting down the ~~wheat~~, the vines, and even the trees, and straitening the city closely, a force consisting of picked troops, marched to the relief of the besieged town, and a battle took place between the Germans and the Romans. The former were not many more in number than a thousand; the latter, between cavalry and infantry, Muratori states to have amounted to well nigh thirty thousand armed men. To the former, however, must be added, the garrison of Tusculum, which sallied out during the battle, and attacked the Roman rear. Thirty thousand of the children of those who had conquered the world were utterly defeated by a handful of barbarians, and, as usual, all sorts of statements remain regarding the number of killed and prisoners. The most probable account is, that six thousand were killed, and that a great number were taken, though one of the Papal writers makes the loss amount to two-thirds of the whole, and declares, that since the field of Cannæ, there had not been so great a slaughter of Roman troops.

Alexander, we are told, burst into tears at these tidings, and in vain endeavoured to collect such a force as might defend Rome. So marked a success, however, gave new energy to the Emperor Frederick. Instead of pressing the siege of Ancona to a surrender at discretion, which he probably intended, he received the submission of the people of that city, upon their paying a large fine and giving hostages; and marching on with the utmost rapidity towards Rome, he led the way himself at the head of his cavalry and accompanied by the Empress. Coming up with some of the troops of the King of Sicily, who had advanced to the aid of Alexander, he drove them before him, making a number of prisoners, and with uninterrupted success he hastened on to Rome itself, at the gates of which city he

arrived about the middle of the year. It was not without a struggle, however, that he gained possession of Rome itself; but that object was effected at length, and he caused himself and the Empress to be crowned in the church of Saint Peter, by the hands of Pascal the Antipope.

Rome was at that time full of fortresses; and, in fact, the house of each of the great Barons was in itself a castle. Alexander remained in Rome, at the fortified house of the Frangipani family, after Frederick was in possession of the greater part of the city; but finding the neighbourhood dangerous, and the people of Rome anxious to be freed from his presence, he made his escape in disguise to Terracina, and passing by Gaeta, found refuge in Beneventum. The Emperor Frederic remained in Rome for some time: too long, indeed, though by so doing he extended his influence far around him in Italy: for a pestilential fever broke out in his army, which in a very short space of time diminished it in a terrible degree. The Archbishop of Cologne, the Bishops of Liege, Spires, Ratisbon, and a number of other prelates, with some of Frederick's near relations and principal officers, died in the space of a few days. As is common with fevers in Rome and its neighbourhood, the disease attacked the strangers and spared the inhabitants; and Frederic, obliged to fly from Rome and the Campania, took his way back towards Lombardy, carrying with him numerous hostages, taken from the principal inhabitants; but bearing with his army the fever which it had contracted in the imperial city. Alexander rejoiced at the news of the unexpected destruction of such a number of the enemy; and he, as well as Becket, taking the pleasantest view of the year's history, ascribed the pestilence to an immediate judgment of God on the head of Frederick.

To what cause they attributed the capture of Rome by the Emperor, and the terrible reverses that Alexander himself had met with, does not appear; but they certainly

never thought of ascribing those evils to pride, ambition, or corruption on their own part.

It is necessary now to leave the affairs of Italy, and to turn once more to what was passing in France, in order to bring the affairs of Aquitaine and Poitou, which we have slightly noticed in speaking of Britanny, up to that point where we have left the other affairs of Henry the Second.

I have shown that after the suspension of arms in 1167, Louis had taken advantage of some causes of discontent which existed amongst the Barons of Britanny, Poitou, and Aquitaine, to urge them into revolt against their sovereign. It is probable Louis intended that the flame should not break out till the truce had expired, and till he himself had recovered from the capture and destruction of Chaumont. But the wary eye of the King of England was upon the insurgents ; the rebellion of Aquitaine and Poitou assumed a tangible form towards the end of the year 1167, and in the midst of the winter which succeeded, Henry marched into those provinces at the head of a considerable force, took and burnt the Castle of Lusignan, and reduced the whole to apparent subjection.

As soon as this was done, the King returned to the north of France, and resumed the negotiations which were going on with Louis regarding a treaty of peace. Those negotiations had already continued some time ; and in order to bring them to a definitive issue, Henry had commissioned the Count of Flanders to confer with the Count of Champagne, and to draw up such conditions as, without being derogatory to him, might be acceptable to the King of France. The paper thus drawn up was laid before Louis at Soissons, shortly before Easter, 1168. Though desirous of war, the terms proposed were so reasonable that the French monarch consented to receive them as the basis of a treaty of peace ; and he sent the Count of Champagne to meet Henry at a

place appointed, in order to receive the King of England's signature to the treaty.

In the meantime, however, new signs of revolt had appeared in Poitou, and Henry had hurried thither to prevent the mischief in the beginning. Louis, taking the absence of Henry at the place of meeting as an insult, hastened, as I have before said, to Bourges, and pledged himself to the revolted nobles of Aquitaine and Britanny, that he would never sign a treaty of peace with the King of England, till all they had forfeited had been restored to them. This might seem an insurmountable bar to any pacific arrangements ; but Henry found means to renew the negociation, and yielded so much, that the King of France was ashamed to remain obstinate. It was accordingly again agreed by Henry and those who treated for Louis, that a treaty of peace should be drawn up, very nearly on the conditions proposed at Soissons. At this period occurred the assassination of the Earl of Salisbury ; and while Guy of Lusignan fled to the Holy Land, his accomplices, whom Henry had punished for that offence, by confiscating their property and ravaging their estates, took refuge at the court of Louis, and loudly complained of the punishment they had received, as if Henry had exceeded his power as sovereign. Louis was very ready to assert their cause ; and in truth he only sought for an opportunity of breaking a promise he had made to meet Henry at La Ferte Bernard for the purpose of concluding the peace which had been before arranged. He therefore insolently demanded not only that the English monarch should suffer the revolted Barons of Poitou and Britanny to be present at their meeting, but should give them hostages for their safety in coming and going. With this, also, Henry complied ; but before the expiration of the truce, he had, as we have shown, punished the fresh revolt of Eudes in Britanny, both by the very justifiable means of

confiscation, and by the infamous act of dishonouring his daughter.

The complaints and solicitations of all the insurgent nobles who now thronged about him from the territories of his rival, the instigations of Becket, and the insinuations of many members of his own court and family inimical to Henry, sent Louis to the proposed meeting at La Ferte, in a state of fury, which made him forget all kingly moderation. On arriving at the town of Chartres, on his way to the place of meeting, a new dispute arose between him and the King of England, both in regard to the murderers of the Earl of Salisbury, and to some clerical lands, respecting which Louis made unjust pretensions. Henry yielded more perhaps than was either just or prudent; and at length, in regard to the lands, he sent back a message that, for the love of God, of the Count of Flanders, and of the good Cardinal, William of Pavia, who was then at his Court, he would not contest the matter, though he still denied the right of the King of France. On receiving this message and hearing that William of Pavia was in the camp of Henry, the King of France fell into a new fit of passion, avowing that the Pope abetted his enemies, and that he would not receive any concession on such terms.

Thus the conference seemed unlikely to take place, as Henry would not of course acknowledge the right of the French king; but Louis suddenly sent messengers, requiring the King of England, more in the tone of a sovereign than an equal, to come immediately to the place of meeting, which was upon the banks of the small river Huisnes, between Chartres and La Ferte, and about two miles from the latter town.

Many circumstances might render Henry unwilling to obey this imperious order. The camp of the King of France was filled with his enemies; and he had reason to know that besides his revolted subjects, Louis had with

him at that time envoys from William the Lion, king of Scotland, who had succeeded his brother Malcolm, and had shown himself as hostile as his brother had been friendly towards the English monarch. The very messengers which that Prince had now sent to the King of France came with views inimical to the King of England ; and at the same time envoys from the insurgent Welsh were eagerly soliciting protection and support from France. A just consideration of the dangers which might arise from an unprepared meeting with a monarch so fickle, violent, and easily led as Louis, has been assigned as the reason why Henry did not obey his summons ; but I find no record to guide me to the real cause of the conduct of the King of England. It is certain that he did not make his appearance during the greater part of the day ; and the French monarch having washed his hands in the stream, called every one to witness that he had kept his appointment, and that Henry had broken faith ; and sending away the greater part of the force which had accompanied him thither, he remained on the banks of the river with the rest, having despatched a messenger to require satisfaction of Henry for the breach of his engagement. Before night, the English monarch suddenly appeared, armed, and at the head of a considerable body of knights. The French king and his companions seem to have been really alarmed at this sudden display of force, and catching up their arms in haste, they prepared for battle rather than for conference. But Henry, perceiving the apprehensions that he had caused, and that night was coming on, retired quietly to La Ferté. Louis returned to Chartres ; and some sharp but tedious disputes took place in regard to the conduct of the two monarchs on this occasion, each accusing the other ; and Louis, as was natural, justifying the alarm he and his nobles had experienced by asserting the existence of a real danger. The negotiations

for peace were broken off in consequence of these events, and war was immediately renewed.

The French king, on his part, effected but little ; for the burning of a few villages, and the ravaging a few fields, which was the extent of his success on this, as on other occasions, could not be considered as very glorious. Henry, on the other hand, carried forward the same savage and iniquitous system on a larger scale ; for having summoned the Count of Boulogne to do him feudal service according to treaty, and the Count of Ponthieu having refused to give a passage to that nobleman's troops, Henry marched into the territories of the latter, and lighted the whole land with the flame of forty villages and small towns.

The success of his enemy, the misfortunes of his vassal, and the impotence of his own efforts, all tended to discourage the King of France ; and about the same time, the reputation and even power of the English monarch was greatly increased by a new embassy which he received from the emperor, of so splendid a description that the report thereof ran through Europe. At the head of the mission was Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony, one of the most powerful, if not the most powerful, of the imperial electors. He was, at this time, son-in-law to the King of England, having now consummated his marriage with the daughter of Henry, who had been escorted to his dominions by the Earls of Arundel and Pembroke, though little more than twelve years of age. The embassy was in every point of view agreeable to the English monarch ; for besides the effect produced by such a testimony of respect, other results might be anticipated from an offer on the part of the emperor, which was soon made known, to support Henry in arms, should he need it, in his war with the King of France.

An alteration however soon came over the counsels of the last-named monarch. It would appear that the Count

of Champagne had laboured sincerely to promote a peace, and that Henry had found means to change, in some degree, the disposition of the house of Blois towards himself. The contest regarding the office of Seneschal of France between Henry and the Count of Blois, might indeed have protracted their enmity ; for it was a point which the English monarch could not give up with honour ; but a compromise of the matter suggested itself, which Henry eagerly seized ; and though I do not discover at what period the arrangement which was afterwards adopted, first occurred to either, yet it is evident that between the conclusion of the truce in 1167, and the rupture of the conferences of La Ferté, the views both of the Count of Blois and the Count of Champagne were turned from war to peace. With these dispositions in his principal counsellors, with his adversary's arms far more successful than his own, and with a new league ready to be formed against him, Louis in the end of 1168 began to listen with complacence to the proposals for peace, which Henry did not fail to renew from time to time ; and at Montmirail, in January, 1169, a definitive treaty was signed, one of the most important articles in which had for its object the endowment of Richard, the second son of Henry, with the territories which his father intended to constitute his portion for life. These dispositions, it is true, were altered entirely by many unexpected events ; but nevertheless, the clause regarding Richard affected the whole course of his after life, and was productive of results the most opposite to those which might have been anticipated.

The stipulations of the treaty were briefly these,

First, it was agreed that Henry should renew his homage and fealty for Normandy in the accustomed form.

Secondly, that he should give up the provinces of Anjou and Maine, and the fealty of the vassals thereof, to Henry, his eldest son ; who should do homage for them to the

King of France, and owe nothing more either to his father or brother,* with respect to these provinces.

Thirdly, that Henry's second son, Richard, should in like manner pay homage and fealty to Louis for the duchy of Aquitaine, and should espouse Adelais, the youngest daughter of that king. It is to be remarked that no precise dowry was settled upon her, but it was left to her father to fix its nature and amount at an after period.

Fourthly, it was agreed that the office of great seneschal of the kingdom of France should be given up by the Count of Blois, on whom Louis had bestowed it some years before, and restored to Prince Henry, in right of the county of Anjou, to which it belonged.

Fifthly, that the King of England should hold Touraine as a fief from the Count of Blois.

Sixthly, that the hostages given to Louis by the insurgent nobles of Poitou and Bretagne should be given up by him to Henry; and that they themselves should return to their former allegiance, upon condition of pardon for their revolt, and the restitution of all the castles and lands, which had been taken from them since the troubles in those countries began.

It will be seen, that in entering into this treaty, Henry still kept in view the chance of one of Louis's daughters succeeding to the throne of France; and although he disengaged the various provinces which he had united in his own person, it evidently appears that he did not intend at once to give up all rule therein, probably trusting to contingencies, as was very frequently the case with him, to obviate any inconveniences which might arise from the arrangements now made.

Richard, to whom he transferred the duchy of Aquitaine, was not yet twelve years old, and Adelais was still young-

* This clause would seem to relate to some claim which his brother Geoffrey might have upon a part of Maine.

er ; so that several years were to elapse, ere the government could possibly be entrusted to that prince. It might well happen also that in the succeeding years, relieved from Becket's pretensions, and having subdued his other internal enemies, he might follow the example of Louis himself in regard to the cession of the Norman Vexin, and object to the fulfilment of the covenant he now made.

However that may be, the treaty was extremely gratifying to the French nobles, who had long beheld with reasonable alarm the consolidation of such immense territories in France in the hands of the English monarch. The Count of Blois, too, who had undoubtedly no small share in promoting the treaty of peace which was now signed had every reason to be satisfied with the result ; as in return for the sacrifice of an office to which he had no right, and which must always have proved a matter of strife between him and each succeeding Count of Anjou, he obtained, as a voluntary act from Henry, a feudal honour, which might at an after period be turned to much greater advantage. To Richard, Henry gave nothing, in fact, but that which had been before promised when, in order to secure the alliance of the Count of Barcelona, a marriage had been negociated between the young prince and the daughter of the Count. The promised bride of Richard had died in infancy, and Henry could hardly do less in betrothing his son to the daughter of the king of France, than he had done on the former occasion. Perhaps, too, he might hope that the Barons of Aquitaine, who had never shown themselves well pleased with their subjection to the crown of England, might be more submissive to his rule, as well as that of his son, when they had the full assurance of being ultimately governed by a Prince of their own.

If such was his hope, the very first proceedings that took place in Aquitaine must have shaken those expectations, for dissensions almost immediately ensued between the

monarch and a number of the former insurgents, regarding the restitution of the lands that had been promised. The Barons insisted that the terms of the treaty were not fully and properly observed towards them, and they consequently remained in arms, with the powerful Lords of Angoulême and La Marche at their head. From the grasping character of Henry, we might be led to suppose that the charge of the Barons was not unfounded ; but the silence of the King of France, to whom recourse was open, and from whom every favour was to be expected, affords a strong motive for believing that justice was on the side of the English monarch. Henry, however, whose activity knew no pause, marched at once into the south, invaded the territories of the Lords of Angoulême and La Marche, captured several strong places, and succeeded in reducing the whole province to obedience. He then returned to Normandy, where he employed himself in the more beneficial works of peace ; and to this period of his reign are ascribed various public buildings of importance ; amongst which was an immense dyke of thirty miles in length, constructed with a view to restrain the Loire from overflowing the lowlands in the neighbourhood of Angers. The frontiers of Normandy, too, he strengthened by lines and fortifications, in order to guard, as far as possible, against those desolating incursions which had so frequently occurred during the late war.

In the meanwhile he had sent his son Henry to Paris, in order to take possession of the high office of Seneschal, in right of the County of Anjou ; and at a great banquet the English prince served the King of France at table in that capacity. Nor had he neglected the affairs of Britanny, although the resistance of the Barons of Aquitaine had called him sooner than he probably intended from that duchy. He had, nevertheless, very shortly after the signature of the peace of Montmirail, taken his son Geoffrey into

Britanny, and caused the nobles of the land to do homage to him in the town of Rennes.

In the south of France he had still some embarrassments to contend with, as his claims upon the county of Toulouse had been in no degree affected by the late arrangements. The count remained virtually unsubdued, and Henry resolved to bring him to do homage. We find that his intention of so doing must have been openly avowed; for at a meeting that took place between the English monarch and the King of France at the Abbey of St. Denis, in November, 1169, the affairs of the county of Toulouse came under discussion between him and Louis; and in order to counterbalance the evil impressions which that prince had received from some late transactions regarding Becket, Henry promised to treat the Count of Toulouse leniently, out of regard to the French monarch. The ostensible motive of Henry's journey to Saint Denis was to accomplish a pilgrimage, or to perform some religious vow; but the real object was to recover, as far as possible, the good will of the French king, and apparently to diminish, in some degree, the influence of Becket. Amongst other concessions or promises which the English sovereign made to Louis, was an engagement to send his son Richard to be educated at Paris by that king; but Henry was always liberal of promises which could be evaded, and this was certainly one which he did not intend to keep unless compelled to do so. At this meeting with Louis, other transactions took place regarding Becket, which will be noticed shortly hereafter. But it is worthy of remark, that kings and princes in that day, notwithstanding the barbarism of the age, and the frequent acts of violence committed, trusted themselves in the hands of other monarchs whose amity was very doubtful, with a degree of frankness and confidence which the progress of civilization unfortunately banished too soon.

After the meeting at Saint Denis, Henry's attention was turned once more towards Britanny ; and, proceeding thither, he held his court in the town of Nantes, celebrated the festival of Christmas with the greatest splendour, received with hospitality and magnificence a number of the principal nobles and ecclesiastics of the Duchy, and then made a complete tour through the whole of Geoffrey's possessions, causing the nobles to do homage to the prince who accompanied him, and preparing the province as far as possible for his own return to England, which was now about to take place. It would appear that he was followed by a considerable force, for his progress through the country is marked by an act, most of the circumstances attending which are left in darkness ; but which—whatever was the necessity—must have been painful to Henry, if he had any human feeling left. It is evident, from the words used by all the historians of the time, that the unfortunate Eudes, Viscount of Porhoet, must have still been in arms against Henry at this period, or that he refused to do homage to Geoffrey ; for it is certain that early in the year 1170, Henry entered his territories, destroyed almost everything that he found therein, forced Eudes to surrender at discretion, and had him tried and condemned to lose the whole of his possessions. Various historians of Britanny censure Henry's conduct in this instance, and declare that he violated the articles of Montmirail ; but as they throw no light upon the causes of Henry's conduct, and as the King of France, to whom any infraction of that treaty was both an injury and an insult, did not, that we can discover, either remonstrate against Henry's proceedings, or support the cause of Eudes in any manner, we are bound to suppose in this instance, as we did in regard of the Barons of Aquitaine, that Henry was justified in the course he pursued.

The whole of Britanny being reduced to obedience, the indefatigable King of England set out for his insular domi-

nions in the first week of March. He was accompanied by a considerable armament; but a terrible storm overtook him in the Channel, and for many hours he was in danger of being wrecked. His whole fleet was dispersed, and one of the best of the ships by which he was escorted, and which contained his physician, several other officers of his household, and some noblemen of the highest distinction, perished, with more than four hundred persons on board. The number of persons this vessel contained is worthy of remark, as the size of the ship itself, which does not call for any particular observation on the part of the contemporary historians, must have been much larger than we are accustomed to ascribe to ships of that day.

Henry himself escaped from the storm, and arrived in safety at Portsmouth. His presence in England was greatly wanted; for peculation to an immense amount had taken place in this country during the long period of his absence, and one of his first acts after his return, was to call a parliament at Windsor during the festival of Easter, when with the consent and authority of his council, he appointed an ambulatory commission of some of the most dignified and respectable men of his realm, for the purpose of inquiring into the malversations which had taken place during the absence of the king. This commission is one of the most extraordinary on record, and was probably modelled on that appointed by William the Conqueror for the purpose of compiling the famous Doomsday book. The commissioners in this instance, as in that, were empowered to examine all persons upon oath, of whatsoever rank they might be, regarding the subject of their inquiry; and the result was, the discovery of a mass of fraud and villainy which induced the king to have recourse to another measure of a very extraordinary kind, namely, to dismiss almost all the sheriffs in the kingdom, with their inferior officers, and to take measures for punishing those persons who,

holding hereditary jurisdictions, were not dependent for office on the king's pleasure.

The immediate object of the monarch, however, in returning to his kingdom, was to cause the coronation of his son Henry to be performed. It was a frequent custom* in those days, when hereditary succession, either to estates or to the royal dignity, had not been clearly and firmly established upon the basis of long and indisputable habit, for monarchs to guard against the caprices of their subjects, the pretences of ambitious relations, and all the many accidents which might occur to prevent a son from inheriting his father's throne, by causing the heir-apparent to be crowned during his father's life-time, and thus to render it impossible for after opposition to take place, without the clear commission of treason. This act by no means implied either an abdication of the crown on the part of the father, or an association of the son to the royal authority. As far as I can discover, it only gave to the prince the name of king, and enabled him to rule, of right, in cases of his father's absence or incapacity.

But Henry had many motives at the present moment for performing a ceremony which was scarcely necessary in order to render the succession of his son secure. In the first place, he loved that son with a degree of weakness, which in all probability nurtured in him many of those gross faults and failings which rendered him an undutiful child, and which would have made him, there can be but little doubt, a cruel and tyrannical monarch. To do this favourite son honour, and to gratify his pride by the title of king, was certainly one of Henry's objects in his present proceeding. We find that he had entertained this purpose a considerable time before he put it into execution; but it is very clear that the design was renewed and carried

* The last time that this was done in Europe, was *I believe* in the case of Philip Augustus, which took place not long after,

rapidly forward, in order to obviate some of the evil consequences which might ensue from the peculiar position of the king and Becket.

To that part of the affairs of Henry which refers to the prelate we must once more turn ; for the disputes with the archbishop now became so complicated with all the other events of the day, and have so great an effect upon the history of the years which follow, that they can be by no means omitted here.

I have mentioned the mission of the legates from Pope Alexander, during the time that his fortunes were at a low ebb ; and I have shown that the pope falsified his word to Henry, by diminishing, at the request of Becket and the French king, the powers which he had strictly promised to give, and which indeed he had actually given at the setting-out of the legates. He had promised in a most decided manner to furnish them with power to inquire, judge and terminate, and he reduced that power to a mere shadow, only permitting them to inquire and mediate. For this conduct, Henry reproached him in a bitter manner in the year 1169,* but Becket, of course, rejoiced, treated the power of the legates with contempt, showed the utmost virulence and malignity towards William of Pavia, and endeavoured to sow divisions between him and his colleague by courting the one while he abused the other. It may be easily supposed that the mission was ineffectual ; though, had the legates proceeded with the powers which had been first entrusted to them, the dispute would have terminated in the only way in which it could end with safety to any of the parties concerned; namely, by the abasement of the stubborn pride of Becket.

* In Rymer, the words he makes use of to the pope are : "Qui cum in potestate sicut nuncii vestri ad nos reportaverunt, et litteris vestris continebatur expressum, quas adhuc penes nos habemus, quod missi fuissent, sicut per eosdem legatos, cum ad nos pervenissent accepimus, potestas illa, ad injuriam nostram, illis subtracta est."

King's mandate. This was done without the slightest re-bistance or opposition, and there cannot be any doubt that the whole laymen of the kingdom were universally in favor of Henry. The clergy, however, resisted. None of the Bishops would take the oath; Becket's mandates and denunciations found their way freely into England; many archbishops of Canterbury; and every thing showed Henry that, should the interdict be passed, and sentence of excommunication pronounced upon himself, the whole clergy of that country would not only resist his authority, but would sell all the real power of the state, and only interposed the shield of his son's innocence between his realm and the sovereign who had in no degree offended the Church of Rome, or merited her censures—from which substitution to be crowned King of England, he gave the nation a Under these circumstances, by causing his son Henry to be crowned King of England, he obtained his son Henry much obvious good might arise—while he remained to him-selvē under the laymen of the kingdom to disregard the oath they had lately taken.

The laymen of the kingdom to disregarde the oath they had used every means which superstition supplied, to induce his realm would not only resist his authority, but would use every means which superstition supplied, to induce the laymen of the kingdom to disregard the oath they had declared their resolution of obeying both the Pope and the archbishops of Canterbury; and every thing showed Henry that, should the interdict be passed, and sentence of excommunication pronounced upon himself, the whole clergy of that country would not only resist his authority, but would sell all the real power of the state, and only interposed the shield of his son's innocence between his realm and the sovereign who had in no degree offended the Church of Rome, or merited her censures—from which substitution to be crowned King of England, he gave the nation a

to assemble the inhabitants, and to swear them to obey the and the officers of counties and of towns are commanded but those also who "favour the Pope or the Archibishop;" threatened with the most severe punishments of the law, Not only are those who introduce the interdict or obey it, now show him at open war with the Church of Rome. kind, into England; and the terms of the King's orders to the introduction of the interdict, or any mandate of the Once more Henry renewed his prohibitions in regard named thus became imminent.

French monarch. The danger of the interdict being professed so long strunged, and the friendship of the Rome had not both to sacrifice a great principle for which not think it better to be cause of Becket, and the Pope did once more eager in the cause of Becket, but Louis was Rome: bribes, promises, and advantages; but Louis was means which he knew to be so effectual with the Court of frequently, but still without effect. Henry employed those within a certain time. The conferences were renewed upon his realm, if he did not grant peace to the Archibishop former with excommunication of his person and interdict once more between the King and Becket, threatening the the Cardinals Gratian and Albert were sent to negotiate occupying too great a space in this work; suffice it to say, to bring about a compromise between him and Henry would appeal. To pursue the whole course of the efforts made Rome, and on the appearance of new danger renewed their The Bishops whom Becket excommunicated appealed to sinners.

Peter himself, if he were on earth, could not absolve such many which he claimed for Rome, and declared that St. them, he forgot altogether the very foundation of the superextraordinary; and, on one occasion, referring to the Bishops of London and Salisbury, when the Pope absolved him in contradiction to the tenets of his church fully as far the extent of his wrath and pride was such, as to involve

become influential with great masses of mankind, they are rendered substantially dangerous to those superior minds who understand them and abstractedly contemn them. Henry was himself superstitious; and though his country, Frederick, would not have entertained the slightest apprehension of his own salvation, if all the popes and bishops of the last thousand years had antehematized him for what he knew to be right, yet the King of England might feel some dread. But had such not been the case, he might well and reasonably fear that the papal condem- Rome. He endeavoured, indeed, to keep the furious masses of the Archbishop out of England, but even in that attempt he was not successful; and he knew that at any time a sentence of excommunication or interdict could be inflicted over the whole of his continental possessions. He had soon to learn to what an extrem the clergy of England would be affected by the conduct of the Roman see. Becket, in spite of remonstrances even from the Pope, excommunicated at once every one who was inclined to him: the king's officers, the king's servants, the Bishop of London, the Bishop of Salisbury. In regard to the latter, Becket would not hold his hand nor recall the blow, even though Alexander himself entreated him to do so. Indeed for that Pope he seemed every day to be losing respect, in consequence, probably, of Alexander's treachery of various lets. Alexander did not do exactly what he wished, as well as from the account given by John of Salisbury of various lets. I write these words without levity; but I did not send, there is every reason to believe that he wrote, but I did not send, that he excommunicated the Pope him- self, if he had dared. I write these words without levity; but I did not send, that he excommunicated the Pope him- self, if he had dared. I write these words without levity; but I did not send, that he excommunicated the Pope him- self, if he had dared. I write these words without levity; but I did not send, that he excommunicated the Pope him- self, if he had dared.

ideal ; but when ideal terrors, by the power of superstition, the Roman church armed itself in the middle ages were every day by threats of using all the terrors of the see of Rome against him. It is true that all the terrors in which the Pope, now rising again in power and authority, was afforded by the conduct both of Henry and Becket at this period. Becket, however, had this great advantage, that such a display of meanness and duplicity, as that which is viewed, there is not perhaps in the whole course of history to more than he meant, without his perceiving it. Fairly could devise such a form of words as would bind the other to prove which, by the cumulating of wits, both striving Becket assumed the form of a struggle of wits, both striving that time it would seem, the dispute between Henry and thus these dissensions remained unabated ; and from

all those holy men ?"

some indignation : " Would you be greater and wiser than to this, even though the French monarch exclaim'd with least of the kings of England ; but Becket would not agree greatest and holiest of his predecessors had done for the that the Archbishop should promise to do for him what the Henry's dignity. On one occasion, the king suggested Becket refused to adopt any without conditions derogatory of submission. The monarch proposed other forms, but king perceiving, refused to receive such an ineffectual act frame his speech, as to leave himself a reserve, which the some sort forced by the King of France to kneel to Henry and make submission ; but the wily prelate contrived so to Becket was brought thither by the mediators, and was in the two kings of England and France met at Montreal, to be somewhat weary of his ambitious resistance. When we do not find it positively stated, yet there is reason to believe that about this time the protectors of Becket began to be somewhat weary of his ambitious resistance.

mandate, however, he was not able to make known in England till long after Henry's object was accomplished; and in the mean time a letter from the Pope, bearing every appearance of authenticity,* was given to the Archbishop of York, directly opposed to that which was shortly afterwards received by Becket. By this the Archbishop of York was authorized to perform the ceremony, and the coronation of the Prince accordingly took place at his hands.

Henry's fondness for his son is said to have led him on this occasion into acts unbecoming his dignity, both as a father and a king. During the banquet which followed the ceremony, he placed a dish with his own hands upon the table of the prince; and if we may believe the ac-

* It has been loudly asserted by Catholic writers that this letter was a forgery. It would seem improbable, indeed, that Alexander would so far commit himself as to give under his hand, within the space of a few weeks, two mandates perfectly contradictory of each other, and always to mention the one opposed to this as the only one he had given. Neither have we any proof that Henry, even in the slightest degree, attempted to justify his own act, or that of the Archbishop of York, by authority given to him by the Pope on this occasion; though he refers to an ancient mandate given before Becket was raised to the see of Canterbury. On the other hand, in support of Lord Lyttleton's view of the genuineness of this document, is the fact of the Pope acting at that very time similar double-dealing in regard to other matters. It will be seen, by the letter that I have transcribed regarding the legates, of the genuineness of which there is not the slightest doubt, that Alexander was playing an insincere game with Becket, entering into engagements obnoxious to Becket's views, and beseeching Henry to keep his promises profoundly secret, and to suffer his letter to be seen by no one. The same was also the case in regard to that negotiation which ended in the nominal reconciliation of Becket and the King, Alexander having settled the whole with Henry, even to the very form of words to be used, keeping it profoundly secret from Becket. In addition to these facts, the letter is to be found in the two best manuscripts of the correspondence in regard to this dispute; and its exclusion from the castrated manuscript of the Vatican is no impeachment of its authenticity.

counts of a writer not exactly contemporary, but very nearly so, the younger Henry, on the Archbishop of York noticing the honour which was paid him, replied that “it was no great honour for the son of a king to be served by the son of a count.” But as this was written after the Prince had displayed his haughty and ungovernable temper, it is not at all improbable that the saying was manufactured to suit the character. The coronation took place in June; and it is particularly remarked, that all orders of the state gladly consented to the act that was now performed.

Scarcely was the coronation of Henry completed, however, when the act produced consequences of a disastrous nature. The King of France, indignant that the ceremony had been performed without that of the Princess Margaret of France, the Prince’s wife, instantly took arms to avenge the insult which he thought had been offered to his daughter, and attacked the frontiers of Normandy with his usual furious intemperance. As soon as Henry was informed that such had been the case, he hastened back with all speed into France, to soothe by fair words, rather than to oppose by arms, the French monarch. It was not difficult for him to show, that, if he had not proceeded with some degree of secrecy,* he might have encountered opposition from Becket, which would have greatly embarrassed his proceedings; and he assured the King of France, that the ceremony should be repeated, as soon as the pageantry of royalty could be prepared for the Princess.

The Count of Blois would appear to have been the mediator on this occasion; and Henry’s excuse was probably the true one; for there is some reason to believe that the young Prince himself was not made acquainted with his

* This would appear from the manner in which the Prince was suddenly called to England, Richard of Ivelcester being sent for him suddenly to Caen.

father's intention till within a short period before his own coronation.

As soon as this matter was fully explained, Louis consented to meet Henry in a meadow at Freteval,* in the neighbourhood of Vendôme, where peace was restored between them, and where Henry was prevailed upon to receive Becket upon an agreement in regard to his submission, which specified distinctly the terms of their reconciliation. These terms were no other than those which Henry himself had shortly before proposed to the Pope ; but the English monarch having made up his mind to a disagreeable task, in his effort to overcome his repugnance, went beyond the point at which he ought to have stopped ; and he displayed much greater familiarity and good-will towards the refractory prelate than was dignified or safe. He received him in the midst of his court, surrounded by a number of French and English nobles, though the King of France himself was not present. As soon as he beheld the Archbishop, he advanced some way to meet him, spoke to him familiarly, promised to restore all things which had been taken from the church of Canterbury, as they were set down in a schedule drawn up by Becket, and to give peace and security to all his friends. Perhaps the king was a little elated by the triumph which he had gained, in causing his son to be crowned in opposition to all the efforts of Becket ; for the Archbishop had written mandates to the other English prelates, forbidding them to be present

* The name of this place has been wrongly written, and the place itself mistaken. Dr. Lingard calls it Freitville, but I am rather inclined to believe that there is no such place upon the face of the earth. I know of none such in France. Freteval is situated very near to Vendôme, on the Loir, which in that neighbourhood is employed in the various purposes of paper-mills and cloth manufactures. This river, be it remarked, is not the Loire, though the similarity of name has probably caused some of the many mistakes which have been made regarding Freteval.

at the coronation of the young king upon pain of anathema. These letters, indeed, as well as the one formerly mentioned from the Pope, the terror of Henry's late proclamation and the fact of the king's presence in England, prevented from being delivered, or at least published, till the coronation was over ; but the king was undoubtedly aware that they had been sent, and was also informed of various other measures which Becket had taken to prevent or delay the ceremony. He now, however, took Becket apart, conversed with him for some time, and seemed to have forgotten almost entirely their long enmity, and all the mortifications which he had received from the Archbishop.

Notwithstanding these demonstrations of a full reconciliation with Becket, Henry refused, on the present occasion, to give him the kiss of peace, as was usually done in such circumstances. On this point Becket had insisted with great determination, but it had been left open in the agreement between Henry and the Pope, whether Henry was to do it in person, or to command his son the young king to perform that ceremony. It was indeed but a ceremony ; yet we may easily conceive that it was a very distasteful one to the English king after all that had passed, especially if any portion of the insolent triumph which Becket displayed in his letters now appeared in his demeanour. The gracious behaviour of the King, however, so far elated the presumptuous prelate, that, if we may believe his own statements, he ventured in bold language to harangue his sovereign on this very first meeting, in regard to the faults which he thought fit to attribute to him. Henry received his admonitions with hypocritical meekness; though there can be little or no doubt that he was indignant at them in his heart. We have indeed no account but Becket's of the conversation which took place ; and there is every probability that in his letter to the pope, he employed no slight exaggeration regarding both his behaviour to the king and

the king's demeanour towards him ; for it is very natural that such should be the result of success upon a proud, and triumph upon a vain, man. He says that the king spoke upon the subject of their late disputes with tears in his eyes, and calling those who had advised him traitors, promised to cast them off. If Henry did do all this, his weakness was as inexcusable as his hypocrisy was disgusting ; but, nevertheless, we have great reason to suppose, as I have said, that there was a good deal of exaggeration in all this statement ; for we find that in various substantial points the king, by Becket's own admission, would not at all give way, even in a matter where the Archbishop evidently considered refusal as painful and humiliating. Henry thus forced Becket to make a petition to be received into grace and favour, in the presence of all the bishops that surrounded him ; and though the prelate took advantage of the favourable circumstances of the occasion to make a variation from the words which had been originally agreed upon, and softened the task by inducing the Archbishop of Sens to speak for him, he evidently considered the act a great humiliation. The king, it would appear, did not think it worth while to renew the dispute on account of the change which Becket had made in the terms of his petition ; and the meeting concluded without any unpleasant circumstance, except a discussion in regard to some of Henry's friends and servants, with whom the Archbishop, notwithstanding the urgent prayers of the Bishop of Lisieux, refused to be reconciled, and who in return treated him with contempt and reprobation.

From the demeanour of the Archbishop at this meeting, Henry might very well judge that no concession on his part would ever make his former courtier his friend. In fact, he had armed the pride of his servant against himself, and the rebellion of pride is never to be quelled. A number of absurd stories were propagated, both at the time and

afterwards, regarding Henry's private feelings towards Becket, and the monarch's words and actions in his own court. Some of these were reported to the prelate, and probably believed by him; but some have certainly been manufactured since, for the purpose of blackening the character of Henry. Thus it was said, that the king had sworn, immediately before the meeting with Becket, never to give him the kiss of peace; and William of Nangis declares that he caused a mass for the dead to be celebrated, on his pretended reconciliation with his Archbishop. The latter tale is certainly false, and the former probably so, though Henry had undoubtedly sworn long before, not to give him the kiss of peace, from the obligations of which oath he had been absolved by the Pope.

The first proceedings of the monarch promised fairly for the fulfilment of all his engagements towards the Archbishop. He immediately sent messengers into England, bearing letters to his son, with an express command to restore to the see of Canterbury, and to all Becket's friends, the lands and possessions which had been taken from them, exactly as they had enjoyed them three months before they had quitted England. Becket indeed sought to obtain more—namely, compensation for all that had been received by the king during his absence; and though the Pope prevented him from urging this point at the time, the prelate never pretended that he would ultimately give it up. Thus the King of England and the Archbishop parted, with the seeds of fresh dissensions ready to burst forth, and bear bitter fruit. Henry returned hastily from Freteval, into Normandy; but scarcely had he arrived, when—perhaps in consequence of the suppression of his feelings and the struggle with himself which must have taken place during his meeting with Becket—he was seized with a violent fit of illness, and for some time his life seems to have been despaired of. In this state the king made a disposition of

his territories by will, leaving to his son Henry Normandy and Touraine, in addition to Anjou and Maine, confirming the gift of Aquitaine to Richard, and putting the solemn sanction of his last act to the establishment he had formed for Geoffrey in Britanny. For his youngest son John, who was yet in infancy, he made no provision of any kind, but left him to the generosity and affection of his eldest brother;* and with this exception, his will would seem to have contained very nearly the same disposition of his property, as might have been made at present under our existing laws and customs. The eldest son enjoyed the whole hereditary estates of his father, the second son inherited the portion of his mother, and the third received that which had been obtained for him by marriage with an heiress, together with the territory which his father had acquired,—namely, the County of Nantes, which Henry had re-annexed to Britanny, as soon as that Duchy was assured to his son Geoffrey. Another point in this will I must notice, as marking that superstition which I have before mentioned as one of the prominent inconsistencies in the character of Henry the Second. Looking forward to his death, he ordered himself to be buried in the Abbey of Grammont, and at the feet of one of the Abbots. It is also to be remarked that during his illness, Henry made a vow to Notre Dame de Roque Madour in Quercy, to perform a pilgrimage to her shrine if he recovered; and on his fever taking a fortunate turn, he attributed that event entirely to the beneficent influence of the saint, and fulfilled his engagement with the utmost devotion.

In the meantime, however, it is probable that both the insolent triumph which Becket displayed in all his letters,

* Hoveden differs from this statement; but if anything was left to John, it was of little importance. I am inclined to believe, that in the passage of Hoveden, which reports the king's will, an erroneous transposition of some words has been made by the copyist.

and the exertions which that ambitious prelate employed to gain from the Pope such unlimited authority as must have brought all the Clergy of England to his feet, and left the King, as far as clerical power could go, entirely at his mercy, had been fully exposed to Henry ; and it is very clear that much was made known, which showed the monarch more distinctly than ever, that Becket was determined still to pursue that course of exaction and menace by which he had already succeeded in carrying so many points of importance. The King, however, committed a great error in neglecting to enforce the restitution which he had already ordered. That this neglect was wilful, there can be no doubt ; and when, some time after his recovery, Becket visited him, and accompanied him to a meeting with the Count of Blois, Henry received him coldly. In answer to the prelate's remonstrances, regarding the non-restitution of the sequestrated estates, he retaliated by a charge of ingratitude, and bade Becket return to England, that he might see how he would behave in that kingdom. He added, however, a renewal of the promise, that full restitution should be made to him. On a second visit, made by Becket to the king at the town of Chaumont, no such bitter discussions took place, and Henry received him with more affability and kindness. Still the restitution was shamefully delayed ; and Becket prepared to return into England, having engaged the Pope once more to insist that the estates should be restored, which was only ultimately done in consequence of a renewed threat of excommunication and interdict.

However factious and turbulent was the conduct of the prelate, that of Henry was certainly mean and unworthy. He suffered himself to be driven slowly to fulfil his promises, and even in accomplishing them he permitted his servants and ministers to commit disgraceful acts towards Becket and his friends, which they dared not have done,

had he not connived at their proceedings. Ranulph de Broc, into whose custody the estates belonging to the see of Canterbury had been given, pillaged and wasted the lands in a disgraceful manner ; and there is every reason to believe, that in many other instances where the friends of Becket were concerned, the same conduct took place. Instead of giving back the estates as they had been three months before the exile's departure, de Broc swept them of the whole produce on the tidings of his return, and laid up the stores in his own castle ; and Henry, who had certainly given Becket reason to suppose that he would furnish him with a sum of money to pay his debts and defray the expenses of his journey, pitifully withheld the supply, and left him to find his way back without assistance.

At the same time, warning after warning poured in upon Becket that his life was in danger, if he set foot in England without having taken means to effect a more sincere reconciliation with the King. It was represented to him, and truly, that the friends and servants of Henry, knowing that their master was in reality as inimical to him as ever, would not hesitate to insult and injure him. Ranulph de Broc had been heard to swear that he should never eat a loaf of bread in England ; and it is evident from Becket's own letters, that on the present occasion he entertained serious apprehensions of the consequences which would ensue from his return to his native country. He was resolved to do so, however, at all risks ; for there can be no doubt that personal ambition was now so thoroughly blended and intermingled with clerical enthusiasm and superstitious devotion as to be perfectly inseparable from them, and that he was sincere in his belief, that in labouring for his own purposes, he was labouring also for the Church ; that his own heart in fact deceived him, and that he was not aware of the real motives on which he acted. In these circumstances, he wrote a letter to Henry, taking

leave of him before he went, in a totally different style from any of his other epistles, mild and benevolent, though calm and dignified ; and had the rest of his actions, even at this time, been consistent with the tone of that letter, he might have averted the fate that befel him, and have deserved, if he had not obtained the name of Saint.

Such, however, was by no means the case. What prompted him to write that letter, it is scarcely possible to tell ; but nearly at the same period he was engaged in instigating the Pope, by gross misrepresentations, not only to suspend the Archbishop of York and all the suffragans of Canterbury who had taken any part in the coronation of the young King Henry, but to renew the excommunication of the Bishops of London and Salisbury. When he found, however, that the Pope mentioned openly in his mandate the false reports on which his sentence was grounded, and even carried his indignation farther than was prudent, Becket took credit to himself for beseeching him to alter his severe decree, without however confessing that the basis on which it had been pronounced was not a just one. He most artfully contrived to assume the character of mediator, and at the same time to solicit the discretionary power either of suspending, or merely admonishing the suffragan bishops, and of threatening or actually excommunicating the king, the Bishop of London, and the Bishop of Salisbury, which, had it been conceded, would have given him the most enormous authority in England that was ever possessed by one prelate.

The Pope did not in every point grant his request ; but he sent him letters of excommunication and of suspension, to be despatched by him to the Bishops of London and Salisbury, as he might judge expedient. Alexander also furnished him with various other powers, enabling him to recall the sentence upon those two prelates when he thought fit ; though the sentence of suspension which the Pope him-

self pronounced upon the Archbishop of York, he reserved altogether in his own hands.

One of the remarkable points in Becket's letters at this period is, that while he was writing to Henry in a strain with which a Christian prelate might well address his sovereign, he was, in his letters to the Pope, comparing his master to a wild beast, requiring a strong chain and a hard stick to keep him in order ; thus at once insulting the person and assailing the authority of one whom he had sworn to honour and defend.

Henry was not deceived by the apparent humility and charity of Becket's letter to himself ; and indeed it is very probable that some of his emissaries at the court of the Roman Pontiff furnished him with a copy of all that the Archbishop wrote to the Pope. We know that shortly before this period, a complete transcript of all the correspondence had been brought over from Rome by one of his envoys ; and it is not to be doubted that he obtained rapid information of all that was said or done by Becket himself or his agents at this time also. Indignant, therefore, as he well might be, he made an excuse not to give the Archbishop a last meeting before he went over, but sent one of the prelate's bitterest enemies, John of Oxford, to accompany him to England, on the pretence of doing him honour. This was malevolent and unworthy ; but at the same time, Henry on essential points demeaned himself with greater generosity. We have reason to know, that John of Oxford was commanded to provide strictly for Becket's safety, and to guard him against any insult or injury at his landing ; and he also bore a letter from Henry to his son, who had remained in England, directing him to put the prelate into possession of all that belonged to him, and to amend all that had been left undone, which ought to have been done.

This, if not as much as could have been expected of the King, was certainly a great concession ; but on Becket's

arrival at Whitsand, on his way to Sandwich, he was informed that Ranulph de Broc, Reginald de Warrenne, and others, instigated, he was told, by the Bishops of London and Salisbury and the Archbishop of York, were waiting on the opposite shores of England to search his baggage on his landing, and take from him the mandates of the Pope. He was already furious at those prelates, not only on account of their opposition, but on account of a plan which they had drawn up for the king, in regard to filling up the vacant bishoprics, which would have diminished the Archbishop's influence, or have brought him into opposition with a great number of the most respectable members of the clergy. The tidings which he received at Whitsand, acting upon a mind already highly irritated, induced him to take that step which ended fatally for himself. He contrived to find emissaries to carry over the mandates the day before he himself crossed the water, and to deliver them immediately to the Archbishop of York and the two bishops. He then proceeded boldly to Sandwich, where Ranulph de Broc and his companions were waiting, though the threats which the first of those gentlemen had used was not unknown ; and some of the prelate's informants had told him at Whitsand, that it was the intention of de Broc and his comrades to put him to death on his landing. No sooner, however, did John of Oxford perceive them in arms with a large body of followers, than he advanced, and prohibited them, on pain of the king's utmost displeasure, to offer either insult or injury to Becket or any of his followers, and he obliged them to suffer the prelate to proceed without any search whatsoever.

The lower orders of people received the exile on his return with demonstrations of the utmost joy and satisfaction; and both at Sandwich and at Canterbury acclamations and gratulations greeted him as he passed. The inferior clergy came forth to meet him with banners and cru-

cifixes ; the monks of his own abbey followed ; and hymns and psalms, and texts of Scripture, found a new and somewhat blasphemous application to the return of the Archbishop.

The close of all, however, was now near at hand, and Becket seems to have felt that fate was pressing him hard on every side ; yet still he went on in the same course, probably believing that he was serving God, when in truth he was serving only his own pride and resentment. The bishops whom he had excommunicated sent to notify to him their appeal to the Pope ;* but at the same time it would appear that they had applied for protection to the young king, for he also sent messengers to Becket, commanding him strictly, to absolve the archbishop and the two bishops, inasmuch as the act of excommunication was injurious to the king and subversive of the laws of the kingdom.

The young king, however, informed him, at the same time, that the two bishops, after having received absolution, should come to him and submit themselves to the canons of the church, *saving the honour of the kingdom.*

* The tremendous sentence of excommunication was pronounced upon these prelates, solely upon the charge of their having been present at the coronation of the young King Henry, a ceremony which Becket claimed a right to perform as Archbishop of Canterbury ; and in regard to which, the Pope himself was so very uncertain as to where the right lay, that the terms he makes use of in one of his undoubted letters are “*contemptu eodem archiepiscopo, ad cuius hoc officium de antiquo jure dicitur pertinere* ;” and in another part of the same letter, he marks it as doubtful, whether the Archbishop of York would not have had a right to perform the ceremony in his own province. Yet merely upon the charge of what he only judges on hearsay to be a fault (*ut dicitur*) he permits Becket to fulminate the severest sentence that the church could inflict upon two prelates, on one of whom the Bishop of London, he had himself passed the highest eulogium, and to the other of whom he was bound by old friendship and affection. The tender mercies of his Holiness were certainly somewhat sharp, as well as somewhat capricious.

Becket now made a double and deceitful reply. It is proved beyond all doubt, that although he had no jurisdiction in the case of the Archbishop of York, he had authority if he thought fit to revoke the sentence upon the other two prelates ; but he replied, that an inferior judge had not the power to release from the sentence of a superior judge, and that no man could undo what the apostolic see had done. Had he added the words “without the authority of that see,” he would have dealt more honestly.

A vehement discussion ensued between Becket and the officers of the young king, in which very violent threats were used towards the Archbishop, who was at length induced to offer to absolve the Bishops upon their taking a certain oath, which the Archbishop of York pronounced to be unlawful and contrary to the king’s dignity. Sharp discussions were renewed upon this subject ; and at length the bishops determined to proceed to Normandy, and inquire the will of their sovereign. At the same time they sent messengers to the younger Henry at Woodstock, telling him that the Archbishop of Canterbury was endeavouring to *tear the crown off his head*.

Much has been said about this expression by writers on both sides ; but in the only sense in which it could be understood at that time, it was perfectly correct. Becket’s view in the whole of these latter proceedings, was at once to take vengeance on the bishops, and to prove the coronation of the young king null and of no effect, thus virtually taking the crown off his head. His object was self-evident ; and the imperious youth with whom he had to do was indignant and enraged in proportion. With this result, Becket was much mortified ; for he had reason to believe that the younger Henry was friendly towards him, and he accordingly set out to make his peace at Woodstock, followed by a large train and three fine horses, which he intended to offer to the Prince as a propitiation. In Lon-

don, however, he was met by messengers from the young king, commanding him in severe terms to retire immediately to the precincts of his church with all that belonged to him. The prelate returned a haughty answer, but obeyed the order ; and, seeing that no measures would now be kept, he determined to commence the war himself, and on Christmas-day anathematized a number of persons attached to the court, at the same time telling the congregation that his dissolution was near. It is probable that he really felt the probability of the event he predicted : for the higher classes of the country, in whose hands reposed the power of the realm at that time, held aloof from him, and few, if any visited him in Canterbury. He stood unmoved, however, and firm, with a constancy and courage worthy of a better cause, showing no fear, or doubt, or hesitation.

In the meanwhile, the excommunicated bishops had joined the king in Normandy ; and on hearing what had taken place, Henry burst into one of those fearful and frenzied fits of passion which too often assailed him ; he vowed with blasphemous oaths, that he would not be omitted in the number of those who were excommunicated solely because they had been present at his son's coronation ; and in the madness of his rage he said, “I am very unfortunate to have maintained so many cowardly and ungrateful men in my court, none of whom will revenge the injuries I have sustained from one turbulent priest.”

Henry probably forgot the words as soon as they were spoken, but they were taken up by others ; and four gentlemen of his bedchamber engaged to do away the reproach which the King had cast upon them, binding themselves by oath one to another, either to force Becket to absolve the bishops, to carry him out of England, or to slay him if he resisted. Thus resolved, they set off instantly for England without the King's knowledge, and after a speedy passage and short journey, arrived at the castle of Ranulph

de Broc, where they found an adviser of no very scrupulous or tender nature. With him they took council during that night, and prepared to execute their determination on the following day.

In the meanwhile, Henry's anger against Becket assumed a more rational and definite form than at first ; and finding that no peace was to be kept with that prelate, he determined at all risks to deal with him as a sovereign correcting a subject.* Before he could take measures in consequence of this resolution, however, it was discovered that four noblemen of high family† and gentlemen of his bedchamber, William de Tracy, Hugh de Moreville, Reginald Fitzurse, and Richard Brito, had suddenly left the court without leave, and were said to have gone to England. Henry might recollect that it was in the presence of these gentlemen that he had spoken the rash words which implied a wish that some one would chastise his enemy Becket ; and fears lest they should meditate the death of the prelate seemed at once to have taken possession of his mind. It is probable that many accidental circumstances attending the mode of their departure tended to confirm these apprehensions, and the King sent forth messengers to all the ports of Normandy to stop the four

* I cannot suppose that Henry's determination to arrest Becket merely proceeded from a desire to place his person in security, as Lord Lyttleton has supposed. I have no doubt at all that his purpose was formed very soon to arrest the prelate, and not to suffer him to escape so as to hold communication with the see of Rome ; and that his words that *if all were excommunicated who had attended his son's coronation, he would not be exempt*, referred to this design.

† It is always particularly noticed by the historians of that period, that the four murderers of Becket were persons of the highest distinction, both by birth and military renown. Thus William of Newbury says : “Tunc quatuor assistentium procerum viri genere nobiles, et militiae actibus clari.” And Hoveden calls them, “Viri quidem generis præminentia conspicui.”

knights ere they could cross the channel. At the same time he despatched Richard de Humet, the Grand Justiciary of Normandy, into England with all speed, bearing a message to the young King, to the effect that he should cause the primate to be arrested without loss of time. Richard de Humet arrived in England almost as soon as Fitzurse and his companions. He was accompanied by a number of noblemen of the King's household, and immediately on landing he despatched two of them to the young King, in order to obtain the assistance and countenance of that prince's officers in executing the commands of his father upon the Archbishop ; Humet himself remaining, to take measures for guarding the coast, lest Becket should obtain information of the orders issued for his arrest, and once more escape to the continent, where he had already done so much mischief. By this time, however, the prelate was under the arrest of a more powerful arm.

In the castle of Ranulph de Broc, the four conspirators found every assistance that they could desire for the execution of their purpose. Their host had been entrusted by Henry with the defence and guardianship of the coast of Kent ; and he had consequently at his command a considerable body of soldiers, which he placed immediately at the disposal of the four knights. How many of these they took with them in their further proceedings does not appear ; but, at all events, they were so strongly accompanied, that they could have overpowered any resistance which was likely to be made.

Concealing their arms, and dividing their force, so as not to alarm their victim before the object was effected, they approached Canterbury in the morning of the twenty-ninth of December, 1170, and the four leaders proceeded unarmed to the Archbishop's palace. They there sent in an attendant to inform Becket that they bore him a message from the King, upon which they were immediately admit-

ted to the chamber where he was conversing with several clergymen. The knights, with threatening looks, and without answering his salutation, demanded if he would hear the King's message in private or in public. He replied, as they pleased ; and Fitzurse accordingly bade him dismiss the clergy. Becket thereupon requested his friends to retire into another room ; but some one kept the door open ; and the fierce tones and angry gestures of the knights soon caused Becket to call the clergy to his side again. In their presence Fitzurse then commanded him in the King's name to absolve the excommunicated bishops. Becket replied at first in the same deceitful manner that he had done once before ; saying that the sentence was the Pope's, not his, and that he could not revoke it ; but the moment after, he boldly and more honestly acknowledged that the punishment of the bishops was not displeasing to him. Thereupon Fitzurse burst forth into furious invectives, and a long dispute ensued between him and Becket, regarding some words which the primate asserted the King had spoken in the presence of Fitzurse, and which he construed into a justification of what he had done in respect of the bishops. Fitzurse told him repeatedly that his assertion was false, and in the end commanded him in the King's name to depart, with all who belonged to him, out of the kingdom of England, as he had broken the agreement by which only he obtained peace from the King. In reply, Becket declared positively that he would not obey, and they in return informed him that it would be at the peril of his head if he did not. The Archbishop then asked, "Have you come to kill me ?" adding; that their swords were not more ready to strike than he was to suffer martyrdom.

It is evident that the four knights had not yet fully made up their minds to the terrible act which they ultimately committed ; for they now turned to the clergy in Becket's

presence, commanding them to secure the person of the Archbishop, and telling them that they should be answerable for him if he escaped. Becket, however, scoffed at the idea of flight ; and the four noblemen leaving him, commanded the knights of his household, as they passed out, to follow them in the King's name, which would appear to have been executed without resistance.

In the course of the day proclamation was made in the town of Canterbury for all persons to remain quiet, waiting the execution of the King's will upon the Archbishop ; and, though an awful apprehension of what was coming was general throughout the city and neighbourhood, yet, strange to say, no measures were taken to prevent it. Becket himself seems now to have been perfectly prepared for, and ready to meet his fate. When some of his companions reproached him for the sharp and angry terms with which he had answered Fitzurse, and said that he should have taken counsel, the Archbishop replied, "There is no need of more counsel now ;" and when told that his enemies were arming, he said, "Well, let them arm ; what matters it ?" His servants, however, barred the doors of the abbey ; and at the hour of vespers his friends led him into the cathedral by his private way, thinking that security would be found in the house of God.

The four knights in the meantime had consulted long together, and we find that at this period Robert de Broc was with them. There was evidently some hesitation remaining in their minds, and they afterwards declared that even when they returned to the abbey their design was merely to arrest the Archbishop, and carry him in chains to the King ; but it is not unlikely that they suffered the vague idea of killing him to mingle with their purposes, as a thing that might happen in the course of events, rather than as a definitive purpose ; for men very seldom allow their minds to form a clear picture beforehand of the crimes they are

about to commit. They go to the scene not unwilling to commit them, but without forming any intention, leave accident to produce the impulse, which carries them on to the extreme.

The knights, however, armed themselves, and followed by the soldiery, proceeded to the abbey a little after three o'clock in the evening. On finding the doors closed, they prepared to break them down ; but Robert de Broc, who was with them, and who seems to have known the locality well, pointed out a window by which they could enter more easily, and of this they immediately took advantage. They then ran hastily through the palace, searching for the Archbishop ; but not finding him there, they hastened to the cathedral, from which was proceeding the sound of the evening service. By this time, the monks had become aware that the knights and their followers were in the palace, and they hastened to lock the door which led thence to the cathedral. Some of the monks, it would appear, even placed themselves on the outside of it, probably with the generous view of interposing between the Archbishop and his pursuers. Becket himself, however, unlocked the door, saying, " You must not make a fortress of the church ; I did not come hither to resist, but to suffer." He then called in the monks who were without, and walked calmly up to the high altar.

It was now twilight ; and the knights with twelve followers rushing in, demanded loudly, " Where is the traitor ? " Becket made no reply ; but when Fitzurse exclaimed, " Where is the Archbishop ? " he turned towards him, saying, " Here am I—a priest, but no traitor ; what would you with me ? "

The knights thereupon, in the King's name, commanded him once more, to absolve the bishops. Becket replied, that they had not made satisfaction for their offence, and that he would not absolve them. His murderers then told

him he should die if he did not ; and he replied firmly, “ I am ready to die that the church may obtain liberty and peace by my blood ; but in the name of God I command you not to hurt any of my people.”

The barons and their followers now rushed forward and seized him, endeavouring to drag him out of the church, most probably with the purpose of killing him in a less holy place ; but Becket resisted ; and being a strong man, they could not force him from one of the columns of the choir, to which he clung. The struggle excited the passions of all ; and unhappily, Becket, at that moment, once more forgot the high and dignified demeanour which had characterized his latter actions, and as Fitzurse pressed harder on him than any of the rest, the Archbishop thrust him violently from him, and called him by an opprobrious name. The baron, furious at the insult, drew his sword, and aimed a blow at the head of the prelate. All the Archbishop’s followers had fled but one devoted friend, his cross-bearer, who, seeing the descending blow, while Becket crossed his hands and bowed his head to receive it, weakened its force by interposing his arm, which was broken, and nearly severed from his body. So heavy was the stroke, however, that, notwithstanding this obstacle, it dashed off the Archbishop’s cap, and wounded him on the head. No murmur broke from his lips ; and only recommending his soul to God, he remained firm in the same position, with his hands clasped and his head bent, till, after enduring a second blow unshaken, a third laid him upon the pavement without a groan.

The butchers then mangled the dead body with repeated wounds ; and one Hugh of Horsea, a sub-deacon who had joined the other conspirators at Canterbury, had the horrible brutality to scatter his brains about with the point of a sword.

This done, they left the body, and hastened to the pa-

lace, which they searched strictly; and gave all the papers that they found to Ranulph de Broc, with directions to carry them to the King. They are said also to have pillaged the Archbishop's dwelling; but there is no reason to believe this; and it is certain that they made their way speedily out of Canterbury, and passed the night somewhere without the walls. It must have been an awful moment for the murderers, when they first awakened from the delirium of fury and excitement in which they had committed their great crime—when they recollect that it was done—that the seal of fate was upon it—that they had slain, without any lawful warrant, without even the excuse of battle or strife, a priest at the altar, the consecrated servant of the God they themselves worshipped, in the very act of offering adoration to his divine Master. All their after acts show how great was the effect of remorse upon them. They seemed bewildered and confused, not knowing what was to be done next—not knowing which way to turn their steps—where to seek an asylum, where to find repose. On the morning of the following day they again appeared before the gates of Canterbury in arms, but did not enter the city; pausing for some time under the walls, and then withdrawing again. It would appear that they remained in Kent for some days; but in the end they retired to the north of England, and took refuge in the castle Knaresborough in Yorkshire, belonging to Hugh de Moreville, where they remained for some months, not daring to present themselves at the court of the King, and not attempting to justify in any way the act they had committed.

In the meanwhile, the monks of Canterbury and friends of Thomas Becket, but more especially John of Salisbury, whose impudent invention the scheme probably was,* de-

* No assertion seems to have been too gross and barefaced for this very elegant writer, but false and malignant man. He has the impudence to declare, that of *his own knowledge* the most extraordinary miracles were

terminated to gain for their murdered pastor the reputation of a saint ; and scarcely was he laid in the tomb, ere a number of fictitious miracles were enacted to confirm the holy reputation of the Archbishop. Ignorance and superstition, from a very early period, not contented with making others share with our Saviour and his immediate disciples in the glory and power of working miracles during their lives upon earth, have claimed for persons to whom it was thought right to attribute particular holiness, the posthumous privilege of sanctifying the spots where their bodies are inhumed ; and by some extraordinary influence, performing wonderful cures, and other marvellous acts, in favour of those who visit the places of their mortal repose. The greediness of superstition, however, is never satisfied ; and not only the spot where Becket lay and the spot where he was buried, were claimed for the working of miracles, but also the pavement before the high altar ; and, in progress of time, the dead Archbishop obtained a retrospective effect for his sanctity. Thus we find from Hoveden and others, that after historians discovered miracles which Becket had even performed in his lifetime, almost at the very period when he was perjuring himself at Clarendon, and breaking his oath at Northampton. It is really painful to read the accounts of water being turned into wine, and of the other blasphemous parodies of our Saviour's miracles, which were attributed to this prelate, by the knavery of some, and the superstition of others.

The struggle between Becket and Henry was now over, but not the consequences, either of that struggle itself, or of the event with which it terminated ; and well might Henry be both horrified and alarmed, when the murder of the Archbishop was communicated to him. We are assured by the Bishop of Lisieux, that, when the news was performed, both at the spot where Becket's blood was shed, and the tomb where he reposed.

brought, he burst into the most frantic expressions of despair. He then seemed for a considerable time perfectly stupefied and overwhelmed by the intelligence, though no one but himself could tell what were the feelings which agitated his bosom at that moment. Whether horror of a deed so black and infamous was not crossed with other sensations of various kinds, and what those sensations were—whether some degree of rejoicing at his deliverance from a strife that had appeared interminable, gleamed through the darkness which Becket's death brought upon his mind—and whether some memories of old affection did not in any degree make him regret the man whom he had loved as a friend, before he hated him as an adversary : these are questions that now never can be answered; but the prospect of the future was quite sufficiently dark and ominous to account for the agony of grief into which the king was plunged. He remained for three days as it were stupefied, scarcely interchanging a word with any one, paying no attention to the affairs of state, and neglecting to give even the most necessary orders. At length, however, on the fourth day he was roused in a degree from this sad condition by the urgent representations and arguments of some of his best friends ; and the good Bishop of Lisieux now undertook to write an exculpatory letter to the Pope, setting forth Henry's abhorrence of the crime that had been committed, mentioning the means that the king had taken to stop the murderers in their progress into England, and at the same time displaying in forcible language the profound grief and agony of mind which he suffered when the fatal result was known. An embassy was also appointed to proceed at once to the pontifical court, comprising a number of distinguished persons, and having the Archbishop of Rouen at its head. The latter, however, was prevented by age and infirmity from going on into Italy, though he set out for that purpose.

While taking these measures to modify the Pope, Henry did not fail to employ means for exculpating himself in the eyes of the clergy. He sent messengers into England to confer with the monks of Canterbury, to express his grief for what had occurred, and to do honour to the remains of Becket, should his body not have been buried before their arrival. But at the same time, the two chaplains who were entrusted with this mission, were instructed to speak of the provocation which the king had received from the prelate, in a manner more firm and decided than might have been expected from the circumstances.

Active enemies, however, were now using every effort to counteract all that Henry was doing. The malignant John of Salisbury was employing all the means that presented themselves to prejudice his master's cause. Two monks who had been chaplains to Becket, were sent to Rome, in fact as accusers of the English monarch. Furious letters and messages were despatched to Alexander, by Louis King of France, by the Count of Blois, and by the Archbishop of Sens.* Every one judged the cause of Henry without hearing his defence ; every one condemned him before they really knew what had taken place. The Archbishop of Sens, indeed, went farther than any of the rest ; for, by virtue of a power given to the Archbishop of Rouen, and to himself as apostolic legate, he pronounced a sentence of interdict against the king's continental dominions. But in this sentence the Archbishop of Rouen refused to concur, and the clergy of Henry's territories in

* The letters of this prelate are not a little abusive ; the following are the terms in which he speaks of his fellow-prelates, the Archbishop of York and the Bishops of London and Salisbury : " Rogerum videlicet Archiepiscopum Eboracensem, diabolum illum, et Lundoniensem Episcopum Gillebertum, et Jocelinum Salisbiensem Episcopum ; non Episcopos sed postaticos," &c. Such was the Christian charity of the apostolic legate.

France seemed to have paid no attention whatsoever to the unsupported denunciations of the Archbishop of Sens.

In the meantime, the monarch's messengers repaired to Italy ; but difficulties, dangers, and inconveniences of various kinds impeded them on their way ; and ere they could reach Frascati, where the Pope then was, he had received a thousand contradictory statements in regard to their coming. At first they had great difficulty in obtaining a hearing : when admitted to a public audience, their voices were drowned in clamour ; and when afterwards they were indulged with a private hearing, they could draw no favourable answer from the pontiff. They were subsequently admitted to another public audience, in which the two chaplains of Becket pleaded against them ; and they were ultimately informed, even by the cardinals most friendly to England, that it was the Pope's intention, on the Thursday before Easter, to pronounce sentence of excommunication against the king, and of interdict against the realm of England, as well as to confirm the decree of Becket in regard to the bishops.

Three of Henry's ambassadors had stayed behind at Sienna, on account of the dangers of the road between that place and Frascati ; but those who had gone on were so terrified by the papal menaces, that they took an oath, that their master should obey implicitly whatever mandate the Pope should issue. Their colleagues, however, on arriving from Sienna, were startled at a concession which went far beyond their instructions, and refused to enter into such an engagement. The Pope, upon this, became furious, confirmed the interdict of the Archbishop of Sens, and forbade Henry to enter any church. He however promised to send legates to *see his humility* : a term which, like many other papal expressions, meant more than it seemed to imply at first sight. Very speedily, however, a change was worked in Alexander's counsels. The Bishops of London and Sa-

lisbury were absolved upon easy terms. The other sentences were suspended ; the Pope wrote to Henry with his own hand, inviting him to humility ; and there can be very little doubt, that about the same time, the pecuniary resources of many members of the college of cardinals were considerably increased by the bounty of a grateful and expectant monarch.

Such being the case, and it appearing certain both to Henry himself and to others, that his absolution would be easily obtained, that monarch ventured to leave his continental dominions, where he had been once more detained far longer than was expedient. He returned to England on the seventh of August, 1171, and immediately proceeded to execute an enterprise which was calculated to increase his reputation, and for which all the circumstances were extremely favourable. No disturbances, no tumult whatever, had taken place in consequence of the death of Becket ; though it would appear that the young king had apprehended some evil to result from the gathering together of such a number of enthusiasts as began to frequent the shrine of the martyr. Nothing of the kind, however, occurred ; and there can be little doubt that the great body of the English nobility, though they very likely would not have countenanced in any way the deed that had been perpetrated, rejoiced in the deliverance of the realm from such a pest as Becket had proved himself. Thus everything in England was tranquil.

In Wales an immense change had taken place, favourable in the highest degree to the views of Henry. Owen Gwyneth had died about two years before, after a troublous, but glorious and memorable reign. He left behind him a multitude of children, by various wives and concubines. His eldest legitimate son, who, according to the usage which was beginning to prevail throughout Europe, would have naturally succeeded to the throne, was excluded, it would

appear, on account of an objection which is not usually considered fatal to the royal succession. This was a defect in his nose. Howel, his natural brother, a prince of great courage, and a well-proportioned nasal organ, was chosen in his stead. His younger legitimate brother, however, named David, descended in both lines from royal ancestors, did not tamely bear the elevation of Howel, but raised an army, encountered his brother in battle, defeated and slew him, some little time before the death of Becket. His success was not sufficiently complete, however, to justify him in courting the enmity of a powerful neighbour, like Henry, King of England ; and much was still left for him to do, in order to seat himself in the government at the period of Henry's return to England. In the civil wars which had taken place, the power of the English and Flemish colonies in Wales had been suffered to increase ; the vast confederacy which had been formed for the purpose of casting off the English yoke, had been dissolved ; and the warlike nobles of the neighbouring country, who still retained fortresses and districts in Wales, had found means to extend their power, and strengthen themselves in possession. In South Wales, Rees ap Gryffyth had been committing some ravages upon the territories of the English adherents ; but he had lost his great strength when the confederacy of the princes of North Wales was broken, and he was unable to resist alone the forces which Henry could bring against him.

Thus every thing disposed the princes of Wales to cultivate, even by a new sacrifice of their independence, the friendship and forbearance of Henry. Nor was their friendship and submission of less importance to the King of England at that moment, for he now meditated annexing to his other dominions the rich and beautiful sister island of Ireland, whose long wrongs and misfortunes may date their origin from the ambition of this king, and from some

of the faults and follies of her own children, at this very period of which I speak. Early in Henry's reign, that monarch had determined to subdue the neighbouring island ; and having not the slightest earthly claim to dominion over Ireland, he applied to the manufactory of unjust titles—the Roman chancery ; and upon the pretence of reforming the manners of the people, and correcting the irregularities of the clergy, he obtained from Adrian IV., who had no right to give it, a donation which he had no right to accept.* This donation is explained by the Bishop of Chartres, who obtained it, as a gift of Ireland, to be held by hereditary right. Other circumstances had intervened, and the assertion of this iniquitous claim had not been made ; but during Henry's absence on the continent, one of the minor Irish sovereigns, Dermot, king of Leinster, a savage and barbarous tyrant, being embroiled in warfare with another Irish sovereign of the name of O'Ruark, or O'Roork, and finding his own subjects rising in great numbers against his tyranny, fled to England in the year 1166, to beseech aid of Henry. That monarch being in his continental dominions, Dermot followed him to Aquitaine, offering, if Henry would restore him to his kingdom, to hold it by homage, as a fief of the English crown. Henry accepted the offer, but only gave Dermot some small pecuniary assistance, and a general license to raise troops in his dominions. Dermot found no small difficulty, we are told, in raising any force ; but at length a celebrated leader, Richard de Clare, Earl of Pembroke, better known by the name of Strongbow, was tempted by an offer of the hand of Eva, the daughter of Dermot, and the promised succession of the kingdom of Leinster, to engage in the cause of the exiled king. Before the Earl

* The Pope founded his title to give Ireland upon the spurious donation of Constantine, and broadly asserted "that all islands belonged to him;" a doctrine which certainly ought not to have been recognised by a King of England.

of Pembroke, however, could raise sufficient forces to fulfil his engagements with Dermot, that prince had obtained also the support of two young noblemen of high reputation, named Maurice Fitzgerald and Robert Fitzstephen. Satisfied with this success, he returned to Ireland, and with a few men whom he had collected in Wales, commenced the warfare before any of the great nobles had arrived. In this warfare he was unsuccessful ; but he contrived to temporise with his enemies, till Fitzstephen, with a considerable body of chosen troops, and several experienced commanders sent by the Earl of Pembroke, joined him, and enabled him to take the city of Wexford, and perform some other exploits. The news of these efforts spreading through Ireland, the whole native forces of the island were collected to overwhelm the small body of English who supported the King of Leinster. They remained firm, however ; and Maurice Fitzgerald following about this time, with a reinforcement, the whole of Leinster was recovered, before the Earl of Pembroke appeared.* The ambition of Dermot, however, extended with success, and the re-conquest of Leinster by the aid of his English auxiliaries led him on to contemplate the subjection of the whole land. This tempting design he held out to the Earl of Pembroke, whose vast revenues had been squandered in acts of magnificent extravagance : but as Henry's commission had only permitted Dermot to raise men for the recovery of Leinster, Strongbow was afraid to undertake the vast attempt suggested to him, without the King of England's permission.

* In regard to these points, as in regard to every other historical fact, there are several statements, varying in different particulars. Some writers say that Dermot did not commence the war before the arrival of Fitzstephen ; and others, that Leinster was completely recovered previous to the landing of Fitzgerald. I have followed the accounts I think the most authentic, and chosen the narrative that seems to me most probable.

He accordingly visited Henry in Normandy ; and with his usual shrewd policy, Henry did not absolutely either refuse or grant his request, but rather encouraged him in the undertaking than otherwise, not at all sorry that the way should be prepared for his own meditated invasion, by the efforts of others, but without the slightest intention of permitting the Earl of Pembroke to acquire that power in Ireland which he aimed at.

Strongbow, though he appeared somewhat doubtful as to Henry's consent, probably thought the King's hesitation in this matter proceeded merely from the intention of avowing him if he succeeded, and abandoning him if he failed ; and, confident of his own military skill, he determined to go on without a more definite acquiescence being pronounced on the part of the King. Hurrying back, therefore, into Wales, he at once sent over to Dermot a small body of knights and archers ; and proceeding along the rest of the Welsh sea-coast, he gained a great number of volunteers, while his officers were preparing a fleet and all the necessary provisions and arms for so great an enterprise. At the end of a few weeks he led a very formidable host to Milford Haven ; but just as he was upon the very point of setting sail, a messenger reached him, bearing Henry's most positive commands, that he should not on any account leave the kingdom. Pembroke, however, had gone too far to recede, unless compelled ; his honour was pledged to Dermot ; his private fortune was ruined ; he had collected a vast number of men, who would require to be indemnified in some manner for their expenses and disappointment if he abandoned the enterprise ; and in despite of the King's own order, he set sail with an army of about twelve hundred men.

It is unnecessary to recount all the exploits that he performed previous to Henry's return to England. Before that event took place, the Earl had made great advances towards

a conquest of the country ; and Henry, while still in France, evidently fearing that Pembroke would gain too much power to remain a submissive vassal of the crown of England, published a mandate, forbidding all his subjects, in the strictest terms, from holding any trade or communication with Ireland, and commanding all who had invaded that country to return, on pain of forfeiture and banishment.

This was a terrible stroke upon Pembroke, who lost a number of his followers and every hope of fresh reinforcements by this decree ; and he immediately sent messengers to Henry, offering to submit all that he had acquired to the will of the king. To drive him to do this was certainly one of Henry's objects ; but still he gave the earl no encouragement, and Pembroke maintained himself unassisted, until, by the death of Dermot towards the end of 1170, he became sovereign of Leinster, in virtue of the treaty formerly concluded between them. He continued to struggle on, performing feats of valour and generalship scarcely credible, during the early part of 1171 ; but in the interim of that year, he received intimation that Henry had arrived in England, and had prepared a large army in order to cross the sea himself, and add Ireland to the rest of his dominions. This was not the only news, however, that the earl received from England ; for the wrath of the king at his determined resistance to his will, had shown itself in various ways. His English estates had been seized and confiscated for his high crimes, and Pembroke, wisely advised, hastened over to throw himself at the feet of his offended sovereign. It was with great difficulty that Henry could be induced to see him ; but the earl having once been admitted, humbled himself so completely, and submitted himself and the whole of his possessions so unre-servedly to the will of the king, that Henry again received him into favour, on the condition of his giving up to the

crown the city of Dublin,* with the surrounding cantreds or hundreds, and also his fortified sea-ports. The rest of his conquests he was permitted to hold by homage of the English crown, and his hereditary estates were restored to him. This being done, he proceeded with Henry to Milford Haven.

With a fleet of four hundred and forty large ships, and an army containing five hundred knights, the king sailed for Ireland, and landed on the coast of Waterford on the eighteenth day of October, 1171. It is unnecessary here to give any more than the mere heads of the king's proceedings in Ireland, for he met with no resistance, and tame submission awaited him wherever he came. Although his invasion of that country was certainly an act of usurpation, it must be acknowledged that he strove to confer the benefits which he had promised in his application to Adrian for a grant of the island. From the moment of his arrival he assumed the tone of a peacemaker and a benefactor, although he came armed with power to force such as were unwilling to be persuaded.

Henry took possession of Waterford without resistance; the people of Wexford willingly surrendered to him; the Prince of Desmond came and did homage, giving hostages for the payment of a tribute; and on a tour which he made by Lismore and Cashel, a number of other princes of the south of Ireland followed this example. After returning for a short time to Waterford, he marched to Dublin, and there spent the winter, receiving the oath of fealty from all the princes of the north of Ireland, with the exception of a few chieftains in Ulster.

Roderic, King of Connaught, indeed, the most powerful,

* The words of William of Newbury are: "Itaque extorsit ei famosissimam civitatem Divilinum, et cetera quæ in acquisitione potiora videbantur, parte vero reliqua cum patrimonio suo Anglico integre illi restituto, jussit esse contentum."

if not the predominant king of all Ireland, submitted in a more dignified manner. Instead of attending the court of the invader, he met on the borders of Connaught two ambassadors from Henry, and entered into a compact with them, the particulars of which are obscure. We are assured that he took the oath of fealty to the King of England, and agreed to pay tribute. At all events he made such submission as induced the English monarch to refrain from any attack upon his territories.

In a synod which was held at Cashel, various irregularities and evil practices in ecclesiastical matters were abolished ; and either there or at Lismore, various laws were enacted, there is reason to suppose, upon the model of those of England, if not exactly similar to them. Thus the subjugation of Ireland was peaceful, if not beneficial ; but it was too easily executed to promise any great stability ; and Henry would in all probability have remained much longer in that island, to give greater solidity to the structure of his power, had he not received—after an interruption of many months in all communication with the rest of Europe.—certain intelligence that the legate sent by Alexander had been waiting for him long in Normandy, threatening him with all the thunders of the church for his apparent contempt. As soon as the passage was open, he lost no time in hastening to meet the messengers of the pope. Taking such measures as he thought would best establish the English power in Ireland, and would at the same time counterbalance the great influence which the Earl of Pembroke had obtained by the acquisition of Leinster, Henry proceeded to Wexford to embark, leaving Hugh de Lacy, as Justiciary of Ireland, to retain possession of Dublin, with forty knights and a number of inferior soldiers. He gave to that leader also, the county of Meath as a fief of the English crown, though whence he derived his right to be.

stow such a territory, which was then in possession of a native Irish prince, would be difficult to discover.

Having completed these arrangements, he sailed from Wexford on the seventeenth of April, 1172, and landed in South Wales on the very same day. He found that some commotions had arisen in that part of the island during his absence, but they seemed of no very great importance ; and after a hasty effort to remedy the evil, which, in consequence of an unfortunate accident, only rendered it worse, he appointed Rees ap Gryffyth Justiciary of South Wales, and hastened on his way towards Normandy. The Welsh prince, it would appear, to whom the greater part of South Wales belonged by hereditary right, accepted without hesitation an office which he imagined would strengthen his general authority, without perceiving that, by exercising it at the will of Henry, he acknowledged in that prince a more intimate right of jurisdiction than even that against which he had so often striven.

Taking his son Henry with him, the King of England embarked at Portsmouth for Normandy, and immediately sent to the Cardinals Albert and Theodebert,* inquiring at what place they would give him a meeting. They appointed the convent of Savigni, where they were met by the king and a numerous court ; but it would appear, that the demands of the legates seemed to the king exorbitant, for they themselves state, “that they could not altogether agree ;” and Henry departed abruptly, as if to return into England. The next day, however, he sent the Bishop of Lisieux and two archdeacons, to grant what they had required, and they then joined the king at Avranches, where the conditions agreed upon were embodied in a proper form, Henry swearing in the most solemn manner, that he had not ordered the death of Becket, and that it was done both without his will and knowledge.

* This name is sometimes written Theodine, sometimes as above.

The articles to which the king agreed, in order to obtain his absolution, comprised the following stipulations : " That within a year from the approaching feast of Pentecost, Henry should give a sufficient sum of money to maintain, according to the computation of the Knights of the Temple, two hundred knights for the defence of the Holy Land during twelve months : that on the subsequent Christmas day, Henry himself should take the cross for three years, and that during the succeeding summer he should go to the Holy Land in person, unless this point were remitted to him by the pope or any of his catholic successors. However, in case of his going, *by urgent necessity*, against the Saracens in Spain, it was agreed that he might delay his journey to Jerusalem for as much time as he should spend in that expedition. It was moreover stipulated that he should not prevent appeals to the pope in ecclesiastical causes, made in good faith, without fraud or evil intention ; nor should he suffer them to be prevented. It was provided, however, that if any one about to make these appeals, should be suspected by him, they should give security, that they did not seek to do wrong to him or to his kingdom.

The most important of these articles declared that he should abrogate those customs which had been introduced *in his time* against the *churches of his territories*, and should exact them no more from the Bishops.* Moreover, it was agreed that if any of the possessions of the Church of Canterbury were still retained, he should give them up in full, exactly as they had been a year before the Archbishop left England ; and that he should restore all the possessions, with his peace and favour, to such persons of both

* In the latter part of this sentence there is in the original a pronoun left out, which omission renders the sense doubtful. The letter says simply, " nec ab episcopis amplius exigetis." This seems to have puzzled Lord Lyttleton, who left the above words out in his translation.

sexes, lay and clerical, as had been deprived of them on account of the late Archbishop. To perform all this the king took an oath, and his son also swore to abrogate the *new* constitutions. Both monarchs also pledged themselves never to recede from Pope Alexander and his successors, so long as the Bishops of Rome should treat them as Christian and Catholic Kings.

These are distinctly the terms and conditions which were proposed by the legates, and accepted by Henry; and it will be remarked, that therein there is not one word in regard to the abolition of anything but the *new* customs which had been introduced in that monarch's own time.* Now the constitutions of Clarendon, had been declared by the Parliament of England, the Bishops, Abbots, and the Barons of the kingdom, to be the ancient laws of the land, and Henry had always maintained that they were the same which had been in force in the time of his grandfather, Henry the First. By this agreement, therefore, he gave up not one single point of that policy to which he had invariably adhered.

Neither is there the slightest allusion in this document, nor in any of those which may be relied upon, that can afford a shadow of cause for believing that Henry engaged, as a condition of his reconciliation with the Church, to

* It is distinctly stated, in the letter of the Cardinals themselves, and in all the contemporary historians, I believe without more than one exception, that the only customs which Henry promised to abolish, were the *new* customs which had been introduced in the Church in his own times. Hoveden, who seems from the way in which he describes the document, to have seen it, if not to have been present when the act took place, distinctly marks, that they were only the new customs introduced in his own time; Gervase has the same clause distinctly; and Diceto, who was present at very many of the acts which I have detailed, though he varies the language, keeps the meaning quite clear. The only one who differs from this account, is the Monk Alanus, who represents Henry as promising unreservedly to repeal the constitutions of Clarendon.

perform those extraordinary penances at the tomb of Becket, which have so generally and falsely been looked upon as an act of submission to Rome. The Cardinals assert indeed, in a letter to the Archbishop of Ravenna, that the king promised in private, various things that were not expressly put down ; but we can scarcely suppose that they were matters of very great importance, for had they been so, the Cardinals would not have failed to ensure the performance thereof, by exacting an oath from the king to that effect. It must be acknowledged, however, that it is a most extraordinary fact, that the legates should not require at the hands of the king the punishment of the murderers of the Archbishop. It has been a matter of marvel, indeed, that the King of England did not punish them in the very first instance ; nor is the account given of his motives by William of Newbury, at all satisfactory to me. That writer says that Henry was afraid of being blamed for whatever course he pursued. Many would be found to say if he spared the assassins that he had encouraged the commission of the crime ; and if he punished them, it would be said that he first instigated them to do it, and then smote them for the act, making himself doubly guilty. But that Henry should suffer the straightforward course of justice to be perverted, from the fear of any such censure, is not at all to be reconciled to the other parts of his character. He had marched with an army to punish less offences ; and the great cause of his quarrel with Becket was his persevering maintenance of the grand rule, that no class of men, whatsoever should escape punishment for crime.

It would certainly appear very extraordinary also, that the punishment of the murderers should form no part of the solemn conditions exacted by the legates ; for though their holy functions prevented their requiring blood as an atonement, yet the Church of Rome has never wanted means of causing the temporal, as well as the spiritual sword to fall

upon its enemies; and they might at all events have stipulated that the four knights who committed this foul deed should be sent to Rome to submit to the correction of the supreme Pontiff. They were indeed so sent by Henry himself, but that he should send them formed no part of his agreement with the Cardinals. The Pope dealt as leniently with the actual murderers as he did with the king, and merely enjoined them to go to the Holy Land, and do penance for their great offence. This, they did, we are told, with much devotion and remorse; and there is reason to believe that three years after Becket's assassination only one out of the four survived.

Some obscurity exists, in regard to the farther proceedings of Henry with the legates, nor can I reconcile all the facts as stated by contemporaries, with the account of Lord Lyttleton. It is certain however that this agreement was signed at Avranches, and sworn to by the king,* on the twenty-seventh of September; at which period his son Henry was with him; and yet we find that in the preceding month, the young king was once more crowned, together with his wife, in the cathedral of Winchester. Strange to say, after all the dissensions which had taken place on account of the coronation of the same prince by the Archbishop of York, the ceremony was on this occasion performed by the Archbishop of Rouen, a foreign prelate. It is to be remarked, however, that the see of Canterbury was now vacant, and likely to be so for some time, while the King of France pressed eagerly for the coronation of his daughter, and the young king himself, from motives which will be explained hereafter, was anxious to render his recognition as king by the people of England, as

* Hoveden gives the date so precisely, that I cannot doubt that he was correct as to the day on which the oath was taken by Henry, and the agreement signed: but the legates in their letter, declare, that they were met by Henry, at Avranches, on the fifth Sunday after Easter.

solemn as possible. If the young king did indeed accompany his father to France, as is generally stated, he must have returned to England very speedily, and after his coronation have rejoined Henry in Normandy ; in which case the negotiations concerning the absolution of the king must have been much longer, and probably more difficult, than the legates thought fit to state in their epistle to the Archbishop of Ravenna ; which supposition is borne out by the account of Diceto,* and by the time which elapsed between their meeting Henry at Avranches, and the conclusion of the affair.

As soon as he had witnessed the absolution of his father, the young king hastened back to England, with his wife ; and whether Henry the Second had become by this time somewhat jealous of his son's favour with a great number of the English barons, or whether he wished to gratify the King of France, I know not, but certain it is, that in a very short time after his landing in England, the Prince was sent for once more into Normandy, and on the first of November, 1172, again passed the seas, all contemporary writers say, most unwillingly. He was sent immediately however, with the young Queen, to the court of the King of France ; but a certain degree of uneasiness is evident at this time in Henry's conduct, which leads me to believe that he had remarked something in the demeanour of his son which gave him cause for apprehension.

Before the end of the year, the English monarch summoned the young king from the court of Louis ; and he might very well have cause for suspicion, though that cause was not sufficient to justify him in taking any measure of precaution more vigorous than that of separating his son from evil counsellors. That the King of France was such, Henry had soon reason to know ; for scarcely had

* He says, "Post longos tandem et immensos tractatus."

the Prince rejoined him in Normandy, when he demanded that he should be put in immediate possession of either Normandy, England, or Anjou. For this demand, there might indeed be some excuse, for it seems to me perfectly certain that Henry had promised the absolute possession of some part of his territories to his eldest son on his marriage with the daughter of the King of France, and that although he did not yield that possession at the time the marriage ceremony took place, it was understood that it should be given as soon as the union of the prince and the princess was consummated. He had also defined what that territory was to be, and had distinctly promised the County of Anjou, in the last treaty of peace with the King of France, so that for refusing that province there could scarcely be any reasonable excuse ; for the young prince was by this time of such an age as to be well justified in demanding that which his father had engaged to give, being now in his eighteenth year. Henry, however, distinctly refused to accede to his request,* and leaving his eldest son in Normandy, proceeded to spend the winter in Anjou.

All was now apparently calm around the King of England ; allied by the closest ties with the French monarch, possessing an immense extent of territory, which displayed at this time a general spirit of submission and desire of tranquillity, triumphant in arms, and successful in negotiation, he could look around him and say that all was peace. The slight movements that took place in Aquitaine and in Wales, were not such as to create any alarm ; the Count of Toulouse himself was preparing to make submission in a peaceable manner ; and a foreign prince, whose alliance was likely to extend the influence of Henry into Italy itself, was treating with the English King for a union between Prince John and his only child.

The sole cause for serious uneasiness which had af-

* Gervase says that Henry refused indignantly.

flicted Henry during the autumn of 1172, was now likely to be done away, by the election of such a successor to Becket as would insure a peaceful state of ecclesiastical affairs. It is true the spirit of the turbulent prelate had survived himself, and still dwelt amongst the monks of Canterbury. The prior Odo had shown the same haughty and intractable disposition, and insisted upon a free election, endeavouring, under that name, to confine the choice of an Archbishop to the monks alone, excluding the votes of the Bishops of the province, and the recommendation of the King. In vain Henry attempted to move him, by means unworthy of a monarch to employ. He resisted flattery and entreaties, bribes and commands ; although the person whom Henry sought to raise to the archiepiscopal dignity, namely, the Bishop Bayeux, was in every respect unexceptionable. At length, however, it was arranged, that the monks should choose three persons, the election of one of whom was to be made by the Bishops and ratified by the King. This was accordingly done in February, 1173, and the names being submitted to Richard de Lucy, the King's grand Justiciary, he summoned the Bishops, and in the end the Abbot of Beck in Normandy was elected, with the consent and approbation of Henry. The matter did not terminate here, however, but remained in agitation for some months beyond the period to which I have carried the other events of Henry's reign ; but it may be as well to pursue this subject to a close, in order that I may terminate the history of the contest between Henry and the see of Canterbury, as far as the actual events are concerned ; for the consequences of that contest were protracted into ages beyond, and affected both England and France to the end of the reign of John and Philip Augustus, if not even to a far more remote period.

The Abbot of Beck, though in every respect agreeable to the King of England, possessed those happiest of all

mental gifts, humility of spirit, and moderation of desire, and refusing the vast wealth and high dignity offered him, could be prevailed upon by no entreaties whatsoever to accept the mitre and the pall. This rendered another election necessary, and the prior Odo now showed himself more turbulent than ever. He tried by every means to exclude the bishops from any influence. He wrangled, disputed, and even disgusted the more wise and tranquil members of his own convent, by his intractable temper. At length, however, it was determined to send over two deputies to the King, in order to ascertain his views and wishes. One of these deputies was Richard, prior of Dover, a man not of the most profound erudition, but still respectable in point of learning, moderate, virtuous, and prudent. The deputies failed to obtain any satisfactory answer from the King; and Henry, having narrowly scrutinized, it would seem, the character and demeanour of the prior of Dover, gave secret orders to those who remained in authority in England, to take such measures as would cause the election to fall upon him. This was managed with great skill; the bishops co-operated with the King, the monks were pleased to choose one of their own order, and Richard of Dover, was accordingly elected towards the middle of 1173. His consecration, however, was suspended for many months, in consequence of some opposition on the part of the young King Henry, who by this time was at enmity with his father, and appealed to the Pope against the election of the prior of Dover. Richard accordingly was obliged to travel into Italy, to sustain his own cause before the Pontiff. Alexander, however, confirmed his election, conferring upon him the legatine power in England; and thus Henry had the happiness of seeing at the head of the English Church a prelate who was inclined to resist rather than to promote the exorbitant de-

mands which Becket had taught the English clergy to put forth.

Thus, as I have said, the aspect of all things was favourable to Henry towards the end of 1172 and the beginning of 1173, so far at least as external appearances went. Had he, however, been allowed to see below the surface, he would have met with one of the most painful instances of the hollowness of apparent prosperity that the eyes of man ever encountered; for at that very moment he stood, as it were, above a covered volcano, and the earthquake which was to rend the ground beneath his feet and pour forth the fiery stream of civil warfare upon him, was already trembling below him.

Though the King might not know his danger, there seemed to be a general feeling throughout his dominions, that this tranquillity was not to last. Men began to observe portents, and to draw evil auguries—almost always a sign that there exists some more rational cause for anticipating disaster—and we have contemporary records of many marvels and convulsions in the physical world. Tremendous thunder was heard simultaneously in England, France, and Ireland, in the midst of winter. Terrible floods of water ravaged various districts; earthquakes were reported from distant regions, and the city of Catania was almost entirely destroyed by one of those awful visitations. Amongst the events, in which the eye of superstition saw the foreshadowing of coming evils, was the appearance of the aurora borealis, which is as beautifully and accurately described by an author of that age, as it ever has been since.* It was probably this phenomenon which gave rise

* The words of Gervase are as follows: “Idus Februarii apparuit in celo signum mirabile nocte plusquam media. Nam rubor quidam videbatur in aere inter orientem et occidentum in parte aquilonali. Radii antem albi per transversum ruboris illius erant, qui nunc graciles in modum lancearum, nunc vero lati in modum tabularum, et nunc hic nunc

to a report mentioned by the good monk of Mailros, that various persons in England had seen the sea on fire.

Certain it is, that the season seems to have been very tempestuous, and also very unhealthy ; but neither distance nor weather offered any impediment to the incessant activity of the English king. So rapid were all his movements, that when he came from Ireland through England into France, Louis, on being informed of his arrival, exclaimed in a peevish tone, “ This King, now in Ireland, now in England, now in Normandy, must fly, rather than ride or sail.” The winter was scarcely past, when he sent for his son to join him at Chinon in Anjou, where he had remained with Eleanor his Queen ; and on the arrival of the younger Henry, the whole court set out immediately for Mont Ferrand in Auvergne, at which place the King of England had appointed to meet the Count of Maurienne and Savoy, the Count of Toulouse, and many other nobles, for the twofold purpose of betrothing John, the King’s youngest son, to the daughter of the Count of Maurienne, and of terminating amicably with the Lord of Toulouse the differences which had arisen from the claims of Henry to the sovereignty of that district.

The meeting took place in the middle of February, and was the most splendid that ever was seen in that part of the world. Besides the personages we have mentioned

ibi quasi à terra sursum in coelum erecti. Erant prædicti radii candidi ut radii solis cum densissimam penetrant nubem. Subsecutus est splendor lucidus auroræ similis æstivæ cum in diem clare lucescit ; postremo densissima nubes subnigra in eodem climate quasi à terra elevata est, quæ diem illum paulatim succrescens obumbravit.” The extreme accuracy of this description, when compared with the wild and absurd accounts of similar phenomena, by many of the monks of that day, of which I have given a specimen in the description of the storm at Scarborough, affords reason to repose with considerable confidence upon the narrative of Ger-vase in other particulars ; especially when we find that the prejudices of his order do not lead him to conceal the errors of the clergy.

the King of Arragon, and the Count of Vienne, each with a large train, were present; and the King of England displayed all the imposing parade of royalty, which his vast wealth and possessions enabled him to call forth when he thought fit, although he was naturally simple in his own habits, and an enemy to ostentation. The marriage between Prince John and the daughter of the Count of Maurienne had been already agreed upon, and nothing remained to be settled but the dowry of the princess and the appanage of the prince. The Count, who, it seems, entertained no expectation whatsoever of having male issue, now settled the whole of his dominions upon his daughter, in case of his death without a son; and also agreed that, even if an heir were granted to him, a large and important part of his territories should descend as the portion of the bride. It was also arranged that, if the Princess should die before the marriage could be consummated, John was to wed her younger sister; and in the meantime, the future bride was entrusted to the somewhat dangerous guardianship of Henry the Second. It does not appear that any territories were expressly stipulated as the appanage of John, or that any thing was given as an equivalent for this vast heritage, except a few thousand marks of silver. The treaty was sworn to on both parts, and at the time the alliance seemed to afford universal satisfaction.

The differences between the Count of Toulouse and Henry were terminated amicably, that prince agreeing to do homage to the Counts of Poitou* saving his duty to the

* Lord Lyttleton, following the account of Diceto and others, and also Don Vaisette in his History of Languedoc, declares that the Count of Toulouse, for himself and his successors, promised to do homage and feudal service to the Dukes of Aquitaine. This, however, is not exactly correct, the account of Hoveden being much more accurate: That writer says, that he agreed to do homage to the Counts of Poitou; and it must be remembered that Toulouse did not hold of Aquitaine, but of Poitou. The account of Don Vaisette, indeed, is altogether inaccurate,

King of France ; but Richard not having accompanied his father to the meeting at Mont Ferrand, the act of homage was put off for some weeks. The Count appears, however, to have attached himself sincerely to Henry for the time, so much so indeed as to give him the first distinct information that evil was plotting against him in the household of his eldest son.

After some time spent in festivity and joy, the King of England and his court separated from the other princes who had assembled at Mont Ferrand, and took their way towards Limoges. In that city—where it would appear that Richard then was—the Count of Toulouse presented himself, and did homage to the English prince and to his father as Counts of Poitou, promising to serve at their summons for forty days at his own expense, and longer upon a reasonable payment. He also agreed to give for Toulouse and its appurtenances, each year, a hundred marks of silver, or ten war horses, each of the value of ten marks.

At Limoges the King of England was again visited by the Count of Maurienne and Savoy, who, on this occasion—it would seem for the first time—inquired what territorial possessions the King of England intended to give to his son John on his marriage. Henry replied, that he would give him the Castles of Loudun, Chinon, and Mirabel ; but on this being announced to the younger Henry, he objected, and positively refused to consent that such an engagement should be entered into. In consequence of this offen-

and only shows what absurdities can be committed in history by not attending to dates. He represents Henry and Eleanor as going to Limoges in the midst of the quarrels between the King of England and his son Henry. He places this in 1172, and makes Henry at that time and place dispose of the Duchy of Aquitaine in favour of Richard, and about the same time arrange the marriage of Geoffrey, his third son, with Constance of Britanny. It is unnecessary to tell the reader, that not one word of all this is accurate.

sive conduct, Henry, following, it is supposed, the suggestion of the Count of Toulouse, removed from the household of his son several of that prince's chief officers, and especially a young nobleman, named Asculfus de St. Hilaire ; but this step, instead of diminishing the evil, only served to bring any hesitation in the mind of the young king to an end.

Leaving Limoges, and taking his son with him, surrounded closely by his own servants, Henry again turned his steps towards Normandy ; but ere he had gone far, the prince contrived to escape the vigilance of those who were watching him, and mounting his horse by night, fled with all speed to the court of the King of France. He first directed his steps towards Alençon, and thence to Argentan ; but then, instead of proceeding to Caen, as was probably his first intention, he turned from his course, and traversing a wild and hilly part of the country, made the best of his way to Chartres. From some contemporary accounts, it would seem that he was accompanied by several of his principal officers, who, on discovering his intention of proceeding into the territories of the King of France, left him, and returned to Henry. Amongst these was Richard de Barre, who brought back to his father the young king's great seal. Henry the Second, in the meanwhile, pursued his son as far as Alençon, where he paused and slept, probably deceived by the first direction of the prince's flight towards Argentan, and believing that it was not his intention to quit his father's dominions. On the following morning, however, he was informed of the new direction in which the young king had turned his steps, and immediately divining the extent of the evil, he mounted his horse, and with that extraordinary activity which distinguished him, rode from fortress to fortress, followed only by a few attendants. Changing his horse continually, he reached the Castle of Gisors, on the frontier of the Norman Vexin,

towards dusk. The distance is immense ; but in the course of this journey, he had visited, we are assured, all his frontier fortresses, had put the governors on their guard, and taken measures for increasing their forces, and for supplying them with all that was necessary to meet those hostilities which he now saw were about to commence. Gisors he took particular pains to provide with all that was necessary for resistance in case of assault ; and at the same time, he wrote letters in haste to the governors of all towns throughout his continental dominions, as well as to his chief officers in England, notifying to them the event which had taken place, and reminding them of their duty to strengthen and defend, to the utmost of their power, the strong places he had committed to their charge.

These necessary precautions instantly presented themselves to his mind, and were executed without any loss of time ; but Henry did not neglect those means which he thought might prove effectual to recal his misguided son to his duty. The servants and attendants who had abandoned him in his flight, were sent back to him by the king, together with his baggage, arms, horses, and silver plate ; and at the same time he despatched the Archbishop of Rouen and the Bishop of Lisieux to remonstrate with Louis upon the countenance and protection he afforded to a son, in opposition to his father. He caused, however, the young Queen Margaret to be detained, which seemed greatly to irritate both her husband and her father ; though they could not expect that the King of England would give up the only hostage that he had, and especially when that hostage was one, who as long as she remained in his hands afforded the greatest inducement for her husband to return to his duty, and for her father to abstain from unjust violence.

It was only after the monarch had arrived at Rouen, however, that he discovered how far spread and deep laid

was that conspiracy, of which the flight of Henry the younger was the first overt act. Where Henry had left the Queen Eleanor, I do not distinctly know, but I am inclined to believe, that it was either at Limoges or Chinon, with her two sons, Geoffrey and Richard. From a letter, however, preserved amongst those of Peter of Blois, we learn, that Henry commanded her to join him immediately in Normandy, and that she neglected or refused to do so. Tidings were speedily after brought to Henry, that his two sons, Geoffrey and Richard, were both deeply implicated in the plot against him, and this intelligence was rapidly confirmed by the flight of both those princes to join their brother at the court of France. About the same time, Henry caused the Archbishop of Rouen to write to his wife, threatening her with the censures of the Church, if she did not return to her husband without farther delay; and he neglected not to have her strictly watched, probably anticipating the step which she was about to take.

Eleanor, who was undoubtedly the secret instigator of the rebellion of the English princes, it is probable, intended, from the first, to follow them to the court of her former husband; and there is every reason to suppose that she only remained behind, either on account of the difficulty of escaping, or for the purpose of giving the last touch to the conspiracy against Henry. Perceiving however that the monarch was now fully aware of the part that she had played, she determined to make a desperate effort for escape, disguised in men's clothes. She was taken, however, in the act, and committed by her indignant husband to strict imprisonment.

The enmity of Henry's sons might well surprise that monarch, for he was a fond and affectionate parent; but that he should have excited the most rancorous animosity in the bosom of Eleanor, could be no matter of wonder to one who knew her so well as he did. The depravity of his

morals and his incessant incontinence, affected but little his people, but they were a daily insult to his wife on a point where vanity and passion were both involved. It was natural, therefore, that she should entertain deep feelings of resentment towards her husband, and that she should try to make her children participate in her sentiments, in order that by their means she might work out her own vengeance. Though she had certainly vast opportunities of effecting this purpose, it is clear that she would not have been successful in so high a degree, had not the young princes themselves, and the nobles who supported them, lately learned to regard the king in a different point of view from that in which he had appeared in the first prosperous years of his reign. They had now seen him engaged in an unsuccessful struggle with an adversary whose whole power was derived from superstition alone ; they had seen him menaced with impunity, alarmed and agitated by the threats of Rome, in some degree vanquished in the conflict, and alternately excited into violent and unkingly passion by the insolent daring of a former servant, and plunged into profound dejection and exorbitant abasement, by the consequence of the very words to which his passion gave utterance. Besides all this, the letters of Becket and his partisans were current throughout Europe, and in almost all of these the King of England was spoken of in terms of reprobation and contempt. The murdered archbishop and his supporters had represented him continually as cunning, but not wise ; violent, but not firm ; less powerful than he seemed to be, and to be driven rather than feared. His reputation, in short, had suffered in a lamentable degree, from his unsuccessful contest with the primate ; and those even who hated Becket, reprobated his conduct and opposed his views, had acquired, in watching the conflict between him and the king, a certain degree of admiration for his firmness, courage, and undaunted resolution, for his high talents and

commanding mind ; while towards Henry they had lost much of that reverence and awe which they had entertained so long as they had beheld him pursuing in uninterrupted prosperity a wise course of internal administration, and making a vigorous progress in external aggrandisement. In short, it would appear, that had it not been for the struggle with Becket, the revolt of Henry's sons, if it had taken place, would have been far less formidable than it proved ; and I have no earthly doubt, that upon the minds of the monarch's sons the influence of their mother would have been exerted with much less effect, if their respect for their father had not been in the first instance diminished by that course of events which have been related in the preceding pages. This, we may well suppose, was more especially the case with Richard, whose bold, fearless, and even rash character, prompted him to despise the arm of ecclesiastical power, and in the course of whose life we shall often have occasion to see the contempt which he had acquired in early life for monks and priests, breaking out in scoffing jests and bitter sarcasms. His mind, of all others, was one to lose all respect for those whom he saw subdued by anything but physical force ; and with him Eleanor's evil counsels were undoubtedly rendered effectual, by the impressions he had received regarding his father's character. A new epoch, however, now opens in his existence—an epoch which began with rebellion against his father and his king, and ended with the usual vain regrets which follow great crimes, when their consequences are past recall.

END OF VOL. I.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIV. LIBRARIES



31293102561440